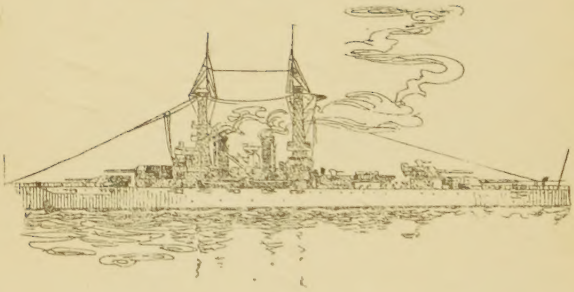

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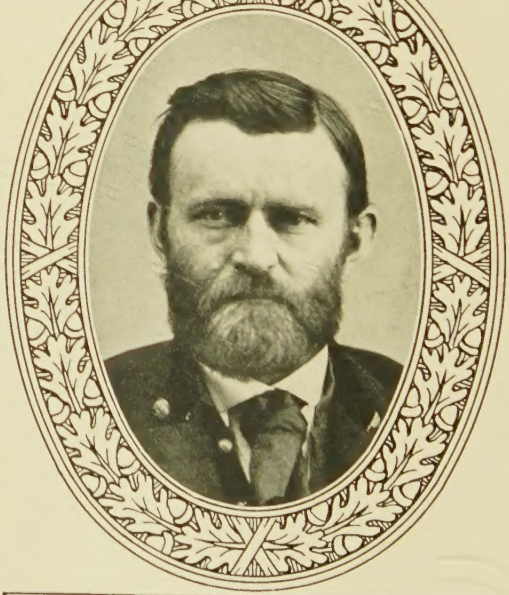

U. S. Grant

ULYSSES S. GRANT

BY

LOUIS A. COOLIDGE

VOLUME I

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AN ACKNOWLEDGMENT

In writing this book it has of course been necessary to consult many others, reference to which could not be made in the run of narrative without impeding its flow.

On the military side of Grant's career: The *Personal Memoirs; Battles and Leaders of the Civil War;* Nicolay and Hay's *Lincoln;* Richardson's *Personal History of U. S. Grant;* Badeau's *Military History;* the books of Generals Sherman, Sheridan, Schofield, McClellan, and James H. Wilson; Dana's *Recollections of the Civil War;* Horace Porter's *Campaigning with Grant;* John Fiske's *The Mississippi Valley in the Civil War; Recollections of A. H. Stephens;* Grant's letters to his family, to Washburne, and to Badeau; the letters of the Sherman brothers — Tecumseh and John; Gamaliel Bradford's delightful series of Union and Confederate Portraits; Owen Wister's brilliantly brief and tantalizing sketch.

On the civil side a multitude of writers have contributed material or incident. No one can hope to deal with any phase of the period of the Civil War and Reconstruction without resorting frequently to

Rhodes's *History of the United States*, a monument of research and an exhaustless well of information. That one may be compelled at times to differ with his conclusions does not lessen the obligation due.

Among other books which have proved of service are: Blaine's *Twenty Years in Congress; The Autobiography* of George F. Hoar; the *Reminiscences* of John Sherman and of Carl Schurz; *The Diary of Gideon Welles;* Hugh McCulloch's *Men and Measures of Half a Century;* Merriam's *Life and Times of Samuel Bowles;* the lives of Stanton, Conkling, Morton, Chandler, and Trumbull; Badeau's *Grant in Peace;* the lives of Sumner, Chase, Stevens, Charles Francis Adams, Seward, Sherman, and Hay in the American Statesmen Series; Henry Adams's *Historical Essays;* John Bigelow's *Retrospections of an Active Life;* McPherson's *History of Reconstruction;* DeWitt's *Impeachment and Trial of Andrew Johnson;* John Russell Young's *Around the World with General Grant;* Haworth's *Disputed Election of 1876;* Joseph Bucklin Bishop's *Presidential Nominations and Elections;* Stanwood's *History of the Presidency;* James L. Post's little volume of *Reminiscences of Personal Friends;* the *Letters of Charles Eliot Norton;* the correspondence of John Lothrop Motley; Oliver Wendell Holmes's sketch of Motley's life; Senator Lodge's *Early Memories;* Charles Francis Adams's *The Treaty*

of Washington. The lives of Grant which have been prepared by Garland, Edmonds, King, and others are excellent in their recital of his exploits in the Civil War, but do not undertake a comprehensive treatment of his public service after Appomattox.

It must be borne in mind that Grant had two distinct careers, each of its own right meriting a place in history. Biographers have not been niggardly with one; what they have written has enriched his fame. But with the other they have been less kind. It has not been the literary fashion to commend him much for his achievements after the Rebellion; yet his success as President in setting our feet firmly in the paths of peace and in establishing our credit with the nations of the world is hardly less significant than his success in war.

This book has been prepared for publication in the American Statesmen Series to cover the years following the Civil War up to the time of Grant's retirement from public life. It does not pretend to be a study of Grant's military record — although the introductory chapters relating to his early life and to his service in the Civil War have been thought necessary to an understanding of his subsequent career.

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ULYSSES S. GRANT

VOLUME I

ULYSSES S. GRANT

CHAPTER I

THE MAN

No man who ever gained enduring fame was more the sport of chance than Grant. No character in history has achieved supreme success in war or the supreme reward of politics who owed less to his own ambition or design. A still and simple citizen, accustomed mostly to the ways of unkempt Western towns, ungifted with imagination, indifferent to the general stir of things, and barely equal to the task of furnishing his family such modest comforts as the neighbors had, he was untouched even by evanescent liking for a military life up to the moment when he flashed across the vision of the world — the greatest captain of his time. And when with war in retrospect he would have been content to live in quiet contemplation of his strange career, unskilled in politics, innocent of the arts of government, he was compelled by force of circumstance for eight eventful years to occupy the highest civil place his countrymen could give. He was the child of splendid opportunities which came to him unsought, for

which he never seemed to care, and which he met with calm assurance of his own capacity.

He rode upon the turmoil which had tossed him to its top serenely confident in his ability to guide gigantic forces thrust into his hands. He saw his country reunited, well advanced upon a clearly marked and broadening road; then willingly went back to private life, rich only in the opulence of fame, unspoiled, unfretted by regrets, and undisturbed by dreams. When he was made Lieutenant-General and wrote to Sherman, acknowledging that soldier's aid in his advancement, Sherman with equal magnanimity replied: "I believe you are as brave, patriotic, and just as the great prototype Washington, as unselfish, kind-hearted, and honest as a man should be; but the chief characteristic is the simple faith in success you have always manifested which I can liken to nothing else than the faith a Christian has in a Saviour." So he seemed to one who saw him near at hand in war; thus looking back we all can now perceive his childlike trust in time of peace.

That this shy, silent man, after a humdrum life till middle age, should have beheld the span of his remaining years studded with triumphs and with tragedies presents a riddle to the student of his time. His mind was not attuned to notions of retreat, of

indirection, or diplomacy. He thought straightforward and was free from artifice — rare qualities which served him well in war and in most great executive emergencies, but were not fitted to the sinuous ways of peace, the strategy of politics, the mysteries of finance, the subtle schemes of courtiers and dishonest satellites; and so it came about that both as President and as private citizen the record of his truly great accomplishments is soiled with pages which we would tear out if we could. Yet we should hate to lose the last heroic chapter, even though its sordid prelude is indispensable to the complete disclosure of unstained nobility of soul.

I. EARLY INFLUENCES

Straggling along the northern bank of the Ohio, a hundred years ago, there was a broken line of settlements which served as landings for the lazy river craft. One of them, twenty-five miles southeast of Cincinnati, perched on a river bend, was called Point Pleasant. Most of its dozen families had drifted in there from the South. A few other settlers were scattered within a radius of twenty miles. Here in a two-room cottage, near the river front, Grant was born on April 27, 1822.

His father was Jesse Root Grant, a recent comer from the northeast corner of the State, who was

running a small tannery for another settler. His mother, Hannah Simpson Grant, was the daughter of a thrifty farmer lately arrived in the county from Pennsylvania, a few miles out of Philadelphia. His name was chosen by lot at a family gathering on the Simpson farm six weeks after he was born. It is said a maiden aunt drew from a hat a slip bearing the name "Ulysses," the choice of Grandmother Simpson who had been reading Fénelon's "Telemachus" and liked the character of whom it was written: "His wisdom is, as it were, a seal upon his lips, which is never broken but for an important purpose." "Hiram" was added to please some one else, and he was "Hiram Ulysses" till he went to West Point, when the Congressman who sent him there rechristened him "Ulysses Simpson Grant" through a mistake in making out the papers. That is his name in history. The neighbors called him "Useless" as a boy; his nickname at West Point was "Uncle Sam" or "Sam." His soldiers spoke of him as "Unconditional Surrender."

When Ulysses was a little over a year old, his father, having laid aside eleven hundred dollars, determined to set up in business for himself, and moved to Georgetown in the neighboring county, a backwoods settlement, twenty miles east and ten miles inland from the river. Though smaller even

than Point Pleasant, it had advantages from a young tanner's viewpoint: it was a county seat, likely to grow; it was in the midst of an oak forest accessible to bark. Its dozen houses — some of frame, a few of brick — were cheerless, primitive, and crude — a downstairs room in which the family lived and ate, a garret where they slept, a lean-to kitchen in the rear. Jesse Grant built him one of brick, to which he added now and then as family and fortune grew, till it was bigger and somewhat better than the rest, though it would be black-listed by the health authorities in any self-respecting town to-day. Here the boy lived until he went to school.

Life had few comforts and no graces for the Grants. The furniture was rough and scanty, the walls were bare, the reading limited to a few sermons, hymn-books, and Weems's "Washington," unless they borrowed from the neighbors; the mother did her own housework like the other women in the village, cooking at an open fireplace with pots and crane; the children did the chores. The only thing resembling music was the wail of hymns in the tiny Methodist meeting-house, or the squeak of a fiddle in the primitive tavern where travelers dropped in off and on and the men of the village took their toddy, almost their only indoor sport. Throughout his life Ulysses Grant could never tell one note from another. "Old

Hundred" and the "Fisher's Hornpipe" were all the same to him.

And yet this ragged little place had its distinctions aside from having been the boyhood home of Grant. When the Civil War broke out it had a population of a thousand, largely of Southern tendencies. In some of the churches Grant himself has said that membership depended more upon hostility to the war and liberation of the slaves than upon belief in the authenticity of the Bible. There was no time during the Civil War when the majority would not have voted for Jefferson Davis for President instead of Lincoln, if they had had the chance. "Yet this far-off Western village," he writes, "with a population, including old and young, male and female, of about one thousand, — about enough for the organization of a single regiment, if all had been men capable of bearing arms, — furnished the Union army four general officers and one colonel, West Point graduates, and nine generals and field officers of volunteers."

Jesse Grant stood well, but had his idiosyncrasies and was not over-popular. He was thrifty, industrious, and independent, held emphatic opinions on politics and other questions, not altogether palatable to his neighbors, and was not tactful in the time and manner of expounding them. A Northern radical among Southern sympathizers he did not bother to

adjust himself to his surroundings. He was a good debater, according to his son; read every book that he could borrow and remembered everything he read — almost his only education. He was muscular, six feet in height, and morally courageous, but credulous, ingenuous, garrulous, and disputatious. He was a rhymester, and some of his verses printed in the local weekly have been preserved, but he could write and speak tersely and forcefully. The tavern loafers with whom he did not fraternize laughed at his carriage and his gold-bowed spectacles, the first in the settlement, and were amused because of his transparent pride in young Ulysses, whom they called dull because he was not "smart" and "talky" like the other village boys.

Jesse had pride of ancestry and was at pains to trace his family to its New England source. He found that Matthew Grant in 1630 came from England to Dorchester in Massachusetts, and shortly moved to Windsor in Connecticut, where his descendants lived till his own father's day; that his grandfather had a commission in the English army and was killed in the French-and-Indian War. His father, Captain Noah Grant, was at the battle of Bunker Hill and served in the Continental Army through the Revolutionary War; after which he migrated first to Westmoreland County, Pennsyl-

vania, and then to Deerfield, Ohio. Jesse had a half-brother, Peter, who went to Maysville, Kentucky, and grew rich. Noah, who was not forehanded, subsequently went to live with Peter, placing some of his other children in homes near Deerfield. Jesse worked for his "keep" with Judge Tod, the father of Governor Tod, and by a curious chance after learning his trade he worked for the father of John Brown of Ossawatomie, and lived in the house where John Brown himself was also living as a boy. Soon after he set up in business as a tanner chills and fever drove him to Point Pleasant, not far from Maysville, a seeming misfortune which he turned to good account; for with all his oddities he was resourceful in emergencies — a trait which he transmitted to his son.

From his mother Ulysses inherited the gift of reticence and self-restraint. Some said he got his sense from her. He never saw her shed a tear; she seldom laughed; she never tried to guide him save by her own sweet, silent influence. Deeply religious herself, she did not undertake to make him so against his will.

Even in his hour of fame she rarely spoke about her son or talked of his achievements except to say that she was thankful he had done so well. When the boy left home for his first long absence at West Point, she made him ready and said good-bye without a quiver of the lip. Thenceforth she saw him only at rare

intervals. When he was President she never came to Washington, which swarmed with less considerate relatives, but stayed at home working as usual about the house. It is written that she prayed for him constantly up to the day she died. "I have no recollection of ever having been punished at home either by scolding or by the rod," writes Grant; he never heard a harsh word from either father or mother, or knew either to do an unjust act; from West Point and from Mexico he wrote them letters full of gossip and affection. He was a natural, human sort of boy.

II. BOYHOOD

A knack with horses was Grant's most noticeable boyish asset — a trick of use to him in later years. He had a way of sticking to a job till it was done, though he might have to figure out odd means by which to do it — a trait which stood him in good stead through life. The numerous anecdotes about his boyhood, current after he had won his fame, mostly illustrate one of these qualities, or both. Every one in the village who was at all well off worked with his hands; the better off, the harder. "It was only the very poor," Grant says, "who were exempt." He was a mere child when he began. His father had a farm as well as a tannery, with fifty acres of woods, a mile from the village, and before he was eight years old

Ulysses was hauling all the wood used in the house and the shops. He could not load it on the wagon, or unload it, but he could drive.

At eleven he was strong enough to hold a plough. "From this age till I was seventeen," he says, "I did all the work done with horses, such as breaking up the land, furrowing, ploughing corn and potatoes, bringing in the crops when harvested, hauling all the wood, besides tending two or three horses, a cow or two, and sawing wood for the stoves." For recreation there were fishing and swimming in the summer, — he was an expert swimmer and diver, — skating and sleighing in the winter. Nothing extraordinary about all this. The other boys in the village were fond of hunting. Grant never hunted in his life, or used firearms for amusement. The thought of killing was abhorrent to him. He loved horses — earned money by driving out into the country passengers arriving in Georgetown by stage; at nine had a horse of his own. At ten he used to drive a span of horses alone to Cincinnati, forty miles, and bring home a load of passengers. He could do stunts at riding, could teach horses to pace, could break them to harness. "If I can mount a horse I can ride him," he used to say. He could handle horses easily because he loved them. All his life he kept away from races. He thought them cruel.

When he was eleven his father, handy at making money in all sorts of ways, took a contract for building the county jail, a job which called for hauling a great many logs; he bought a horse called Dave for Ulysses, and set him to hauling. The woods were two miles from the site of the jail, the logs a foot square and fourteen feet long. Eleven men did the hewing and loaded the logs; the boy drove. One cloudy day the hewers were not in the woods, and Ulysses was left alone, but by his own ingenuity the boy did the job of several strong men. A fallen maple lay slanting with its top caught in another tree. Using this as an inclined plane the boy hitched Dave to the logs, hauled them up on the trunk till they nearly balanced, and then backing the wagon up to it hitched Dave to them again and snaked them forward upon the axles one at a time.

He was the best traveled boy in the village. At Flat Rock, Kentucky, on one of his trips he traded one of his horses for a saddle horse which caught his fancy. Here is his own illuminating story: "I was seventy miles from home with a carriage to take back and Mr. Payne said he did not know that his horse had ever had a collar on. I asked to have him hitched to a farm wagon, and we would soon see whether he would work. It was soon evident that the horse had never worn harness before; but he showed

no viciousness and I expressed a confidence that I could manage him. A trade was at once struck, I receiving ten dollars difference." The next day with a Georgetown neighbor whose brother had swapped the horse he started home. The horses were frightened and ran away twice. "The road we were on struck the turnpike within half a mile of the point where the second runaway commenced, and there was an embankment twenty or more feet deep on the opposite side of the pike. I got the horses stopped on the very brink of the precipice. My new horse was terribly frightened and trembled like an aspen; but he was not half so badly frightened as my companion, Mr. Payne, who deserted me after this last experience and took passage on a freight wagon for Maysville. Every time I attempted to start my new horse would commence to kick. I was in quite a dilemma for a time. Once in Maysville, I could borrow a horse from an uncle who lived there; but I was more than a day's travel from that point. Finally I took out my bandanna . . . and with this blindfolded my horse. In this way I reached Maysville safely the next day."

He earned his first money by taking a load of rags to Cincinnati, and selling it for fifteen dollars. He was less than twelve years old and the business venture was his own device. "My best training," he con-

fided to Thomas Kilby Smith, at Vicksburg, "was before I went to West Point."

There is another story made much of by biographers given to drawing lessons, as showing the boy's guilelessness. It is about a colt which he was sent to buy. His father had offered twenty dollars, but the owner, Ralston, wanted twenty-five. "My father . . . said twenty dollars was all the horse was worth, and told me to offer that price. If it was not accepted, I was to offer twenty-two and a half, and if that would not bring him to give the twenty-five. I at once mounted a horse and went for the colt. When I got to Mr. Ralston's house I said to him: 'Papa says I may offer you twenty dollars for the colt, but if you won't take that I am to offer twenty-two and a half, and if you won't take that to give you twenty-five!' It would not take a Connecticut man to guess the price finally agreed upon."

The story got out among the other boys, and it was a long time before he heard the last of it; but Grant was only eight years old. If we must have an incident disclosing Grant's guileless trust in others' honesty, we can find one more pertinent of a later date. There is a letter bearing date of October 24, 1859, when, writing to his younger brother Simpson from St. Louis, he says: —

"I have been postponing writing to you hoping to

make a return for your horse — but as yet I have received nothing for him. About two weeks ago a man spoke to me for him and said that he would try him the next day, and if he suited give me $100 for him. I have not seen the man since; but one week ago last Saturday he went to the stable and got the horse, saddle, and bridle, since which I have seen neither man nor horse. From this I presume he must like him. The man I understand lives in Florisant, about twelve miles from the city. . . .

"P.S. The man that has your horse is the owner of a row of six three-story brick houses in this city and the probabilities are that he intends to give me an order on his agent for the money on the first of the month when the rents are paid. At all events, I imagine the horse is perfectly safe."

CHAPTER II

THE TRAINING OF A SOLDIER

I. WEST POINT

GRANT'S early schooling, the best the village gave, and then two terms in private schools, at Maysville and at Ripley, was limited to the "three R's." He never saw an algebra till after his appointment to West Point, and as he studied no more than he could help, his scholarship left much to be desired. The love of learning which lured him from the tannery was probably as much his father's passion as his own. The knowledge which he found of greatest use in after years he garnered in the University of Common Sense. The ingenuity he showed in solving boyish problems was classified as genius when later put to harder tests.

He says that as a boy he did not like to work, "but I did as much of it while young as grown men can be hired to do in these days and attended school at the same time"; yet, when he was not stirred to swift decision in emergencies, he was of sluggish habit all his days. "As I grow older I become more indolent, my besetting sin through life," he wrote, in 1873, when he was President, to Adam Badeau. But in

necessity he was a thunderbolt. This mingling of torpidity and force throws light upon the seeming inconsistencies of his career. Other men with contradictory traits have been conspicuous in history, but the career of none of them exhibits greater contrasts.

Most of the villagers thought him backward when they thought of him at all, but they were rather fond of him in spite of his slow ways. He was pure-minded and clean of speech. He never swore; "a good steady boy with no bad habits"; "awkward and countrified"; "quiet and slow"; "a great hand to ask questions"; "said little himself, but he could answer questions if you gave him time"; "always carried a stick; whittled most of the time, but never made anything"; "stumpy, freckle-faced, big-headed"; "steadfast, manly"; "quiet gray-blue eyes, strong straight nose, straight brown hair and bulky build"; "not pugnacious"; "a lover of the woods"; "modest, unassuming, determined, self-reliant, decisive." These are some of the phrases those who knew him as a boy have given us. And then this suggestive line from one of them: "A favorite with the smaller boys of the village who had learned to look up to him as a sort of protector."

He loathed the tannery, shrank from the thought of taking up his father's trade, and on a fateful day, when home from Ripley for the holidays, he was con-

demned to help out in the beam room with its reeking hides, he told his father as he trudged along toward the repulsive task that he would work at it if necessary till he was twenty-one, but not a minute longer — that he had rather be a farmer or a down-the-river trader or get an education. Then Jesse Grant bethought him of West Point.

Five boys had already gone there from the county to get a start in life at government expense. The last of them, his nearest neighbor's son, had just been dropped for failure in examination, but was too proud to come back to the village, so that no one knew of his discomfiture except the Grants. Why not Ulysses for the vacancy? The Congressman, Thomas L. Hamer, belonged in Georgetown, and had once been Jesse's closest friend, but they had quarreled months before and were not then on speaking terms. He was a Democrat and Jesse was a Whig. So Jesse wrote to Thomas Morris, Senator from Ohio, but Morris turned the letter over to the Congressman, who, welcoming the chance to make up with his former friend, agreed to the appointment out of hand. This was the winter of 1838–39. When Jesse read the letter from Morris telling him that his request had been handed on to Hamer, writes Grant in his "Memoirs," "he said to me, 'Ulysses, I believe you are going to receive the appointment.' 'What appoint-

ment?' I inquired. 'To West Point; I have applied for it.' 'But I won't go,' I said. He said he thought I would, *and I thought so too if he did.* I really had no objection to going to West Point, except that I had a very exalted idea of the requirements necessary to get through. I did not believe I possessed them and could not bear the idea of failing."

Thus with reluctance Grant entered on the training for his great career. He says himself that he was led to fall in with his father's plan chiefly by his desire to travel. "I had been east to Wheeling, Virginia, and north to the Western Reserve in Ohio, west to Louisville and south to Bourbon County, Kentucky, besides having driven or ridden pretty much over the whole country within fifty miles of home. Going to West Point would give me the opportunity of visiting the two great cities of the continent, Philadelphia and New York. This was enough. When these places were visited I would have been glad to have had a steamboat or railroad collision or any other accident happen, by which I might have received a temporary injury sufficient to make me ineligible for a time to enter the Academy. Nothing of the kind occurred and I had to face the music. . . . A military life had no charms for me, and I had not the faintest idea of staying in the army even if I should be graduated, which I did not expect."

There was no thrill for him in the call of bugles or the roll of drums. A bill had been introduced in Congress abolishing the Academy. He watched its progress impatiently, hoping it would pass, and when in time he became reconciled to the curriculum his idea was to get through the course, secure a detail for a few years as assistant professor of mathematics at the Academy, and afterward obtain a permanent position as professor in some respectable college, — "but circumstances always did shape my course different from my plans." At the same time there are occasional flashes of another mood, as when he writes his cousin: "I do love the place. It seems as though I could live here always if my friends would only come too." From his undemonstrative mother the boy had drawn a vein of sentiment.

He took little interest in his studies; rarely went over a lesson a second time during his cadetship; for lack of something better got books from the library; read Bulwer, Cooper, Marryat, Scott, Irving, and Lever. Mathematics came "almost by intuition," he used to say, but other branches, especially French, were hard and his standing was low. "In fact if the class had been turned the other end foremost, I should have been near head. I never succeeded in getting squarely at either end of my class in any one study during the four years. I came near it in

French, artillery, infantry and cavalry tactics, and conduct." He was good at draughtsmanship and did a few crude paintings which still survive.

A ten weeks' furlough at the end of two years he enjoyed beyond any other period of his life. "My father had sold out his business in Georgetown — where my youth had been spent, and to which my day-dreams carried me back as my future home if I should ever be able to retire on a competency. He had moved to Bethel, only twelve miles away, in the adjoining county of Clermont, and had bought a young horse that had never been in harness for my special use under the saddle during my furlough. Most of my time was spent among my old school-mates — these ten weeks were shorter than one week at West Point." A wholesome picture.

II. CADET GRANT

Among the highly pedigreed young Southerners trained in the graces of society and looking on a soldier's calling as fit for scions of a landed aristocracy, the slouchy little Grant must have seemed out of picture — hopelessly middle-class and common. But unobtrusively — perhaps without quite knowing it himself — he was absorbing knowledge of the traits of many whom in after years he met in active service either as friends or foes.

In the Academy while he was a cadet were several who won distinction on one side or the other in the Civil War: among them Sherman, Thomas, Longstreet, Hardee, McClellan, Ewell, Buell, Rosecrans, and Buckner. In his own class were Franklin, Quinby, Gardner, Hamilton, and Rufus Ingalls, who was his room-mate for a time; that splendid soldier, Charles F. Smith, was commandant of cadets. From some of these we get a few swift pencilings. Sherman, three years his senior, tells of seeing "'U. S. Grant' on the bulletin board where the names of all newcomers were posted. One said, 'United States Grant'; another, 'Uncle Sam Grant'; a third shouted, 'Sam Grant.' The name stuck to him and by it he was henceforth known by the cadets at the Academy."

"A lad without guile," says Viele; "I never heard him utter a profane or vulgar word." "A perfect sense of honor," says Longstreet. "The most scrupulous regard for truth," says Hardee. "Had a way of solving problems out of rule by the application of good hard sense," says Ingalls. Others say, "A clear thinker and a steady worker"; "Little enthusiasm in anything"; "Not a prominent man in the corps, but respected by all"; "A very much liked sort of youth"; "No bad habits whatever"; "No facility in conversation with the ladies, a total absence of elegance"; "Could n't dance, never attended parties or entered

a private house"; "He never held his word light, he never said an untruthful word even in jest."

A single splash of color to relieve the gray monotony. He was the most daring horseman in the Academy. "Grant's jump on York" is still conspicuous in the annals of West Point, when, in the presence of Winfield Scott and the official board of visitors, his horse leaped a bar held high above the head of a soldier who rested it against the wall. There is a tinge of the dramatic in the story of another exploit told by General James B. Fry, at the time a candidate for admission to the Academy: "When the regular service was completed, the class, still mounted, was formed in a line through the center of the hall. The riding-master placed the leaping-bar higher than a man's head and called out, 'Cadet Grant!' A clean-faced, slender, blue-eyed young fellow, weighing one hundred and twenty pounds, dashed from the ranks on a powerfully built chestnut sorrel horse and galloped down the opposite side of the hall. As he turned at the farther end and came into the stretch across which the bar was placed, the horse increased his pace, and measuring his strides for the great leap before him, bounded into the air and cleared the bar, carrying his rider as if man and beast had been welded together. The spectators were speechless. 'Very well done, sir!' growled old Hirshberger, the

riding-master, and the class was dismissed and disappeared; but Cadet Grant remained a living image in my memory."

And there is the tale of his beating at the hands of a larger cadet, his going into training, and his final victory in a fourth encounter after a second and third defeat.

As for predictions of his future greatness, we need not give them special weight. Such casual prophecies are remembered only after one has made them good. But it may well be true that Hardee said, while both were still in the Academy, that "if a great emergency arises in this country during our lifetime Sam Grant will be the man to meet it"; that one of his teachers said, "the smartest man in the class is little Grant!" and that in the first days of the Civil War, Ewell, then a Southern officer, remarked: "There is one West Pointer whom I hope the Northern people will not find out. I mean Sam Grant. . . . I should fear him more than any of their officers I have yet heard of. He is not a man of genius, but he is clear-headed, quick and daring."

Grant has told how he was dazzled by Winfield Scott, who in his first year's encampment came to review the cadets. "With his commanding figure, his quite colossal size and showy uniform, I thought him the finest specimen of manhood my eyes had ever

beheld. I believe I did have a presentiment for a moment that some day I should occupy his place on review — although I had no intention then of remaining in the army. My experience in the horse trade ten years before and the ridicule it caused me were too fresh in mind to communicate this presentiment even to my most intimate chum." He regarded General Scott and Captain C. F. Smith as "the two men most to be envied in the nation."

Grant graduated from West Point in 1843, number 21 in a roll of 89. He would have gone into the Dragoons, as the Cavalry was called then, but there was no room for him in the single regiment, and he was given his second choice, the Fourth Infantry. Before entering service he was furloughed at Bethel for three months, and while there the officers of the militia asked him to drill the troops at general muster. He was sickly at the time, a victim of the malady known as "Tyler's Grip." One who saw his exhibition says that "he looked very young, very slender, and very pale"; that his voice "was clear and calm, cutting across the parade ground with great precision — rather high in pitch but trained."

Grant has told of two trifling incidents during this furlough which gave him a distaste for military uniforms from which he never recovered. Setting out bravely for Cincinnati in his regimentals he was

followed by a boy who called out, "Soldier, will you work? No, sirree! I'll sell my shirt first"; and back in Bethel again he was mortified to find the drunken stable-man at the tavern parading the streets and doing the stable chores in bare feet with a pair of sky-blue nankeen pantaloons, "just the color of my uniform trousers, with a strip of white cotton sheeting sewed down the outside seams in imitation of mine."

III. MEXICO

Grant wore his uniform eleven years. When he left West Point the regular army had 7500 men — not enough troops to go around among the officers who were graduated at the Academy. He was assigned to his regiment as a "supernumerary" with the rank and pay of a second lieutenant, and was ordered to Jefferson Barracks, near St. Louis, then "Far West."

He was anxious to quit the service, and as a step toward getting a professorship in some little college he wrote to West Point asking for a detail to the Academy as an assistant in mathematics. But before that could be brought about, Mexico began to boil, and in May, 1844, after nine months of garrison life, he was ordered south with his regiment. He had lost his heart meantime to Julia, the sister of his classmate Fred Dent, whose father, "Colonel" Dent, had a large plantation, "White Haven," about five miles

from the Barracks, with negroes enough for comfort.

There was his usual persistence in the manner of his wooing. He was on leave of absence when his regiment was ordered south, and when he got back to St. Louis the rest were gone. Before following them, he saddled a horse and set out for White Haven. On the road he had to cross a creek which ordinarily ran nearly dry, but on account of recent heavy rains was now overflowing with a rapid current. "I looked at it for a moment to consider what to do. One of my superstitions had always been, when I started to go anywhere or to do anything, not to turn back or stop until the thing intended was accomplished. I have frequently started to go to places where I had never been, and to which I did not know the way, depending upon making inquiries on the road; and if I got past the place without knowing it, instead of turning back I would go on until a road was found turning in the right direction, take that, and come in by the other side. So I struck into the stream, and in an instant the horse was swimming, and I being carried down by the current. I headed the horse toward the other bank and soon reached it, wet through, and without other clothes on that side of the stream." He kept on, borrowed a dry suit from his future brother-in-law, and thus caparisoned declared his love.

A year later he went back to St. Louis, and al-

though the Colonel thought his daughter ought to look higher than "the small lieutenant with the large epaulets," he won a reluctant consent to an engagement. They did not marry till August 22, 1848, six months after the war with Mexico had come to an end.

Before war was actually declared, Grant's regiment lay in camp for over a year at Fort Salubrity, in the pine woods near Natchitoches, between the Red River and the Sabine, then for two months in barracks at New Orleans, then by boat to Corpus Christi, at the mouth of the Nueces River in Texas, where the "army of occupation," three thousand men, was assembling under the command of Zachary Taylor.

All this time the movement ostensibly had been to prevent filibustering, though there was no question among the troops that its real purpose was the menacing of Mexico and the annexation of Texas. "For myself," says Grant, "I was bitterly opposed to the measure, and to this day regard the war which resulted as one of the most unjust ever waged by a stronger against a weaker nation. It was an instance of a republic following the bad example of European monarchies, in not considering justice in their desire to acquire additional territory. . . . The occupation, separation, and annexation were, from the inception

of the movement to its final consummation, a conspiracy to acquire territory out of which slave States might be formed for the American Union. Even if annexation itself could be justified, the manner in which the subsequent war was forced upon Mexico cannot. . . . The Southern rebellion was largely the outgrowth of the Mexican War. Nations like individuals are punished for their transgressions."

But Grant was a soldier and took his orders. His Mexican service did him credit, though it did not give him fame. He went into the battle of Palo Alto a second lieutenant in May, 1846, and entered the City of Mexico, sixteen months later, with the same rank, — "after having been in all the battles possible for one man, and in a regiment that lost more officers during the war than it ever had present at any one engagement." But he was mentioned in reports and was brevetted first lieutenant and then captain for gallant conduct. General Worth made his "acknowledgments to Lieutenant Grant for distinguished services"; at Chapultepec, Major Francis Lee reported that "Lieutenant Grant behaved with distinguished gallantry on the 13th and 14th"; Colonel Garland says: "I must not omit to call attention to Lieutenant Grant, who acquitted himself most nobly upon several occasions under my observation."

He was early made regimental quartermaster, but

this could not keep him out of action. At Monterey, he mounted a horse, left camp, rode to the front, and joined the charge — the only mounted man and thus a special target. When ammunition was low and there was a call for a volunteer to take out a message asking for new supplies, he swung himself over a saddle, and, with one foot holding to the cantle and one hand clutching the horse's mane, dashed down the empty street, within the range of fire from every side, leaped a four-foot wall and delivered his appeal.

At Chapultepec he found a belfry which commanded an important position, dragged a mountain howitzer to the top of it with the help of a few men, and dropped shots upon the enemy to their great confusion.

At Molino del Rey, says Longstreet, "You could not keep Grant out of battle. The duties of quartermaster could not shut him out of his command. . . . Grant was everywhere on the field. He was always cool, swift, and unhurried in battle . . . unconscious apparently, as though it were a hail storm instead of a storm of bullets. . . . I heard his colonel say: 'There goes a man of fire.'"

"You want to know what my feelings were on the field of battle," he wrote home; "I don't know that I felt any peculiar sensation. War seems much less terrible to persons engaged in it than to people who

read of battles." To an officer who asked him years later whether he ever felt fear on the battlefield he replied, "I never had time."

Yet he was an eminently practical and efficient quartermaster. At Tacubaya and at Monterey he rented bakeries and ran them for the benefit of the regiment. "In two months I made more money for the regimental fund than my pay amounted to during the entire war." From his experience, then, as quartermaster, with freedom to range in time of battle, he got ideas about feeding and clothing an army which stood him in good stead throughout the Civil War; and he learned other lessons in Mexico. He saw Scott cut loose from his supplies and live on the country; he saw Taylor cool and unhurried under fire, commanding his troops, without a uniform save for a private's blouse, and learned from him simplicity in army regulation; he learned that he could keep his head while under fire; and he became familiar with the points of strength and weakness of officers against whom he was to be pitted in the Civil War. Lee, Longstreet, Buckner, Jackson, Pemberton, and the two Johnstons, Southerners, most of them of higher rank, never thought that in plain little Grant they were disclosing their true military quality to a coming conqueror.

CHAPTER III

AD INTERIM

I. WASTED YEARS

PEACE with Mexico brought lethargy to Grant. After his mild experience with the world as a cadet and then in garrison and camp, he had had his fling with war and had come through with merit, though no great prestige. But he was now condemned to the monotony of a subaltern's life in frontier posts, with nothing to look forward to but years of drudgery, unless he had the luck to strike a tour of duty which would open up the way to resignation and agreeable employment in civil life — like the professorship in mathematics to which he had aspired. But there was nothing of the kind in sight. As quartermaster he was stationed first at Sackett's Harbor, on Lake Ontario, for a cheerless winter, because another officer with greater pull at Washington had grabbed Detroit, the regimental headquarters which was supposed to have attractions in a social way, although a frontier post. Then for two years, Scott having righted this injustice, Grant had Detroit, to which he was entitled by position, but as he had no social instincts, being dumb with women, awkward and shy with men,

he got no pleasure from its tinsel gayeties. Few people knew that he was there. Another gloomy winter at Sackett's Harbor, and then in 1852 orders to gold-crazed California with his regiment. There was a baby boy, born two years earlier at White Haven, and a second on the way. He left his little family at Bethel and started on the tiresome journey to the coast.

On this trip he had a chance to show resourcefulness in an emergency, his only worthy opportunity between Chapultepec and '61. Transportation across the Isthmus had broken down by reason of the rush, and it was unexpectedly put up to Grant as quartermaster, by such ingenious methods as he could devise, to get his expedition of eight hundred people to the other side. There he found cholera and a far heavier burden — all the details of caring for the sick, the burial of a hundred dead, the countless grewsome and mournful offices of such a plague. "Grant seemed to be a man of iron . . . seldom sleeping and then only two or three hours at a time . . . he was like a ministering angel to us all," writes one who knew him there. It is a striking thing that Grant in later years spoke oftener of his experience at Panama than of his battles in the Civil War.

His service on the coast was at Vancouver, on the Columbia, and at Humboldt, two hundred miles

from San Francisco, where in due time he gained his captaincy. It was a dismal life. He abhorred hunting, fishing bored him — the only recreations of his fellow officers; there were few books to read; he pined for wife and babies, one of whom he had not seen. He showed a letter once to an old sergeant on which his wife had traced the outline of his baby's hand, and as he put the letter back without a word his eyes were wet — a likely incident; for all his life his deepest sentiment was for his home.

Like many another officer thus circumstanced, he drank more than he should and in his case a little was too much. It did not cloud his judgment or impede his speech, but it impaired his power of locomotion and he was physically helpless while his mind was clear. Those who knew him testify to this so uniformly that it must be true; and while not of supreme importance it cannot be ignored. It helps explain the obstacles he had to overcome at the beginning of the war and the peculiar influence which Rawlins had so long as Rawlins lived. Without it we should miss an angle of his character which throws a dart of color for our better understanding of the man. We should not have had Lincoln's pat comment after Shiloh: "I can't spare this man. He fights." Or his whimsical remark that if he knew Grant's brand of whiskey he would send a barrel to his other generals.

Just why Grant quit the army has been a question in dispute. The reason which he gives in his own story, that he saw no chance of supporting wife and children on his pay and so concluded to resign, is no doubt strictly true. It is in harmony with what we know was his intention when he left West Point. There was nothing in the service, especially in time of peace, for which he cared, and when he left it no one could foresee the conflict close at hand. But there were circumstances not entirely pleasant which conspired to fix the date of his decision upon a step which had been long in mind. He would, of course, have liked to turn his military training to account in some profession better suited to his taste, but in his exile to the coast that prospect disappeared, and two or three unlucky business ventures taught him that he could not supplement his meager earnings in that way. His monthly pay as a lieutenant was thirty dollars, and besides he had for rations eighty cents a day and for a servant, sixty-five, with wood for fuel, a single room and kitchen — an income all told of seventy-three dollars and fifty cents a month. His monthly pay and allowance as captain during his last month of service was ninety-two dollars and fifty cents, and with the slowness of promotion that was all he could have expected for years — a dismal prospect for a man whose wife and babies were by the speediest

route eight thousand miles away. As he was near his captaincy he, of course, had pride in taking on the higher rank, but after that the sooner civil life for him the better. Thus it stood with him in April, 1854, when, having been intoxicated while paying off his men, he was reproved by his commanding officer, Major R. C. Buchanan, noted throughout the service as a martinet, who told him that if he did not resign charges would be preferred. Grant resigned. He did not have to, and officers who served with him have said that he would not have been sentenced to dismissal if he had stood trial. But he was tired of barracks life; he had just become a captain. He was anxious to get East where he could be with those who loved him and were dependent upon him, and without reflecting that the incident might later prove embarrassing, he wrote a letter resigning his new commission the same day he accepted it, to take effect July 31, 1854. By doing this he left his record clear of a court martial, but he could not guess that he would ever wear a uniform again or be of consequence enough to stir to life old service scandal and stimulate its sting. To Jefferson Davis, as Secretary of War, it fell to accept Grant's resignation. Jesse Grant was thriftily disturbed when he got word of it from the War Department. There is on file there his letter to Davis of June 1, protesting: "I never wished him to

leave the servis. I think after spending so much time to qualify himself for the army, and spending so many years in the servis he will be poorly qualified for the pursuits of private life. . . . Would it then be asking too much for him to have such leave that he may come home and make arrangements for taking his family with him to his post? . . . I will remark that he has not seen his family for over two years, and has a son nearly two years old he has never seen. I suppose in his great anxiety to see his family he has been ordered to quit the servis."

In spite of his dislike for garrison routine there was nothing in his California life to cause especially unpleasant recollections. Otherwise he never could have written: "I left the Pacific coast very much attached to it, and with full expectation of making it my future home. That expectation and that hope remained uppermost in mind until the Lieutenant-Generalcy bill was introduced into Congress in the winter of 1863–64. The passage of that bill and my promotion blasted my last hope of ever becoming a citizen of the farther west."

II. A STRUGGLE FOR A LIVING

"When you hear from me next," he told his comrades as he said good-bye, "I'll be a farmer in Missouri." That was his hope. But he was in worse

straits than he had thought. Money owing him in San Francisco did not materialize. A good-natured quartermaster clerk cashed a draft and found him transportation to New York. He landed strapped. A creditor at Sackett's Harbor failed him. If his classmate Buckner, who was recruiting officer, had not guaranteed his board at a New York hotel, he would have slept outdoors until his father sent him money to get home. There was no great joy in Bethel over his return. His younger brothers were doing fairly well in leather, but with all his West Point training he had not made good. Jesse, who had been so proud of him, could hardly think of him without a shade of shame. He went on to his wife and babies at White Haven and settled on an unbroken tract of eighty acres which Colonel Dent had turned over to his wife for a wedding present six years before. He cleared it, built him a log cabin out of trees he felled and hewed himself, and with grim humor called the new estate "Hard Scrabble." He worked hard for a living, peddled grain and cordwood in St. Louis for ready money, grubbed stumps, bought hogs at sales, and did the things a farmer must. He was more thrifty than his neighbors and showed more ingenuity. While they were burning wood for fuel he sold his at good prices to the coal mines near by for use as timber props, and used for fuel the less ex-

pensive coal. Chills and fever hit him. He gave up farming, swapped his place for a little frame house in St. Louis, and tried his hand at real estate, combining with a cousin of his wife named Boggs who had desk-room in a lawyer's office. Money was slow after the panic of 1857. He was too soft-hearted to collect rents from hard-pressed tenants. There was not business enough for two. He applied to the County Commissioners for appointment as County Engineer, the salary of which was nineteen hundred dollars; but they gave it to another applicant. There were five commissioners, two of whom were Democrats and three Free-Soilers, and the selection was made on party lines. His father-in-law was a slaveholder, strongly Southern in his sympathies, and Grant had no particular political affiliations. "You may judge from the result of the action of the County Commissioners," he wrote his father on September 23, 1859, "that I am strongly identified with the Democratic party. Such is not the case. I never voted an out-and-out Democratic ticket in my life. I voted for Buchanan for President to defeat Frémont, but not because he was my first choice. In all other elections I have universally selected the candidates that, in my estimation, were the best fitted for the different offices, and it never happens that such men are all arrayed on one side." [1]

[1] *Letters of Ulysses S. Grant*, p. 20.

He had a place as clerk in the Custom-House for a month, but the collector died and he was hard put to it. "I do not want to fly from one thing to another, nor would I," he wrote his father; "but I am compelled to make a living from the start, for which I am willing to give all my time and all my energy." His father had prospered. He was worth $100,000, it is said, a sizable fortune for that day. He had established his tannery in Covington, Kentucky, where he now lived and he had also bought a wholesale leather business in Galena, Illinois, which was in charge of Simpson and Orvil, his two younger sons. Ulysses, much against his will, acknowledging at last his failure in farming and real estate, turned to Jesse for advice and help. Jesse referred him to Simpson, and Simpson sent him to the Galena store, "to stay until something better should turn up." The house bought leather and sold shoe findings, saddlery, fancy linings, and morocco. Ulysses served as clerk because he was good at figures; the other brothers did the bargaining for which he was not fit. He was allowed eight hundred dollars salary, and drew seven hundred more to settle obligations in St. Louis, a sum which he paid back afterwards. He had a comfortable little house, attended the Methodist church, wore an old blue army coat which he had bought on the Pacific Coast, traveled to Iowa and Wisconsin

once to buy hides, and was becoming gradually settled to his environment, although few people knew him even by sight. "In my new employment I have become pretty conversant," he wrote a friend in December, 1860, "and am much pleased with it. I hope to be a partner pretty soon, and am sanguine that a competency at least can be made out of the business."

And then came Sumter and the call for troops.

CHAPTER IV

THE AWAKENING

How, when the North sprang to Lincoln's call, the men of Galena found among themselves the unassuming captain with his shabby army coat, singled him out because he had seen service, putting him in the chair at their war meeting, offering him the captaincy of their company which he declined, asking him to form and drill them and see that they were suitably equipped, and how when they marched to the station through flags and cheers, he stood in the crowd and watched them pass, trailing along with his old carpetbag, following them to Springfield, to be of service if he might, has been recited many times. But this is not all the story. For months Grant's mind had been in process of slow fermentation. All through the pregnant winter filled with secession talk, he was observing the approach to war. "It is hard to realize," he wrote in December, "that a State or States should commit so suicidal an act as to secede from the Union, though from all reports I have no doubt but five of them will do it. And then, with the present granny of an executive, some foolish policy will doubtless be pursued which will give the seceding States the sup-

port and sympathy of the Southern States that don't go out."

To Rowley, who said in February, "There's a great deal of bluster about these Southerners, but I don't think there's much fight in them," he replied earnestly, "You are mistaken, . . . if they ever get at it they will make a strong fight. . . . Each side underestimates the other and overestimates itself." Seven days after Sumter he was writing to his Democratic, slaveholding father-in-law: "Now is the time, particularly in the border slave States, for men to prove their love of country. I know it is hard for men to apparently work with the Republican party, but now all party distinctions should be lost sight of and every true patriot be for maintaining the integrity of the glorious old Stars and Stripes, the Constitution and the Union. No impartial man can conceal from himself the fact that in all these troubles the South have been the aggressors and the Administration has stood purely on the defensive, more on the defensive than she would have dared to have done but for her consciousness of strength and the certainty of right prevailing in the end. . . . In all this I can but see the doom of slavery. The North do not want, nor will they want, to interfere with the institution. But they will refuse for all time to give it protection unless the South shall return soon to their allegiance."

To his abolition father, two days later, his words were dutiful, as befitting filial and financial dependence, but clear: "We are now in the midst of trying times when every one must be for or against his country, and show his colors too by his every act. Having been educated for such an emergency, at the expense of the Government, I feel that it has upon me superior claims, such claims as no ordinary motives of self-interest can surmount. I do not wish to act hastily or inadvisably in the matter, and as there are more than enough to respond to the first call of the President, I have not yet offered myself. I have promised, and am giving all the assistance I can in organizing the company whose services have been accepted from this place. I have promised further to go with them to the State Capital, and if I can be of service to the Governor in organizing his state troops to do so. What I ask now is your approval of the course I am taking or your advice in the matter. . . . There are but two parties now, traitors and patriots, and I want hereafter to be ranked with the latter, and, I trust, the stronger party."

To his sister: "The conduct of eastern Virginia has been so abominable through the whole contest that there would be a great deal of disappointment here if matters should be settled before she is thoroughly punished. This is my feeling and I believe it uni-

versal. Great allowance should be made for South Carolinians; for the last generation have been educated from their infancy to look upon their government as oppressive and tyrannical and only to be endured till such time as they might have sufficient strength to strike it down. Virginia and other border States have no such excuse, and are therefore traitors at heart as well as in act."

CHAPTER V

CALLED TO THE COLORS

Grant understood the sober side of war, and so at Springfield in the brood of patriots chirping for recognition he did not push his way. He was not eager for spectacular distinction after the way of politicians hunting for a rostrum to address the pyramids, confusing oratory with a genius for command. He was indifferent to gold lace and epaulettes — just a plain soldier who had not done well in civil life and thought he saw a chance to work again at the one trade he knew. The city was a scene of cheap confusion. Richard Yates, the governor, eager and keen of wit in politics, was struggling blindly in a flood of strange emergencies. Every man of consequence in Illinois was pressing for commissions for himself or for his friends. Companies of volunteers were pouring in, undrilled, unskilled, ununiformed, unarmed, hardly a musket to a dozen men; regiments of raw-boned boys and awkward squads, officered by village Cromwells and country-store Turennes, — among them soldiers to the core like Logan, — soon to comprise the nucleus of the hardiest veteran army the world had ever seen.

Of all of the companies one of the best came from

Galena, hastily drilled and uniformed by Quartermaster-Captain Grant, who now, neglected in the crowd and having done his duty by his local volunteers, was on the point of leaving Springfield, when Yates, perceiving that his military training might be utilized, found him a corner in a dingy closet, which served the adjutant-general as an office, and let him spend his time in filling blanks for orders — the sort of thing a boy might do after once having caught the trick.

"My old army experience I found indeed of great service," Grant wrote after twenty years. "I was no clerk, nor had I any capacity to become one. . . . But I had been quartermaster, commissary, and adjutant in the field. The army forms were familiar to me and I could direct how they should be made out!" So he stuck to his simple task, — looked up old muskets in the arsenal, made reports, answered questions about regulations, showed such familiarity with military things that he was made drill-master at outlying camps, and was so quietly effective that Yates made him "mustering officer and aide," calling him "colonel" and paying him three dollars a day. It is a singularity of Grant's career that he never asked for an appointment or promotion which he obtained and that he never shirked a job no matter whether mean or great which came his way.

So numerous and eager were volunteers that the Legislature provided for additional regiments. It was some of these that Grant was set to muster in, and when that should be done, he wrote his father three weeks after Lincoln's call, "I presume my services may end. I might have obtained the colonelcy of a regiment possibly, but I was perfectly sickened at the political wire-pulling for all these commissions, and would not engage in it. I shall be in no ways backward in offering my services when and where they are required, but I feel that I have done more now than I could do serving as a captain under a green colonel, and if this thing continues they will want more men at a later day. I can go back to Galena and drill the three or four companies there and render them efficient for any future call. My own opinion is that this war will be but of short duration."

A few days in St. Louis, while mustering in a slowly gathering regiment, just as Francis P. Blair and Nathaniel Lyon were cleaning up Camp Jackson which the secession Governor Claiborne Jackson had established on the outskirts with a view to seizing the city and the Federal arsenal. He saw the rebel flag hauled down from the secession headquarters, and he recites how, when a spruce young fellow in a street car turned to him to say, "Things have come to a pretty pass when a free people can't choose their own

flag; where I came from, if a man dares to say a word in favor of the Union we hang him to the first tree we come to," he replied, "After all, we are not as intolerant in St. Louis as we might be; I have not seen a single rebel hung yet nor heard of one; there are plenty of them who ought to be, however."

His work at mustering in was quickly over. Brigadier-General John Pope, a native of the State stationed at Springfield as Federal mustering officer, whom he had known at West Point and in Mexico, offered to get him recommended for appointment to the Federal service; but Grant, who was a carpet-bagger and had no influential friends to push him, would have none of it. "I declined to receive endorsement for permission to fight for my country."

So back to Galena for a week, where he was filled with restlessness. "During the six days I have been at home," he writes, "I have felt all the time as if a duty were being neglected that was paramount to any other duty I ever owed. I have every reason to be well satisfied with myself for the services already rendered, but to stop now would not do."

During this visit he wrote the Adjutant-General of the Army tendering his services and offering the only suggestion he ever made about his rank: "Having served for fifteen years in the regular army, including four years at West Point, and feeling it the duty of

every one who has been educated at the government expense to offer their services for the support of the Government, I have the honor, very respectfully, to tender my services until the close of the war in such capacity as may be offered. I would say, in view of my present age and length of service, I feel myself competent to command a regiment if the President, in his judgment, should see fit to entrust one to me. Since the first call of the President, I have been serving on the staff of the Governor of this State, rendering such aid as I could in the organization of our state militia, and am still engaged in that capacity. A letter addressed to me at Springfield, Illinois, will reach me." No letter ever came. The application was buried among department papers and the Adjutant-General never saw it till long after the war was over.

But other avenues of service opened to the diffident soldier, who later wrote: "I had felt some hesitation in suggesting rank as high as the colonelcy of a regiment, feeling somewhat doubtful whether I would be equal to the position. But I had seen nearly every colonel who had been mustered in from the State of Illinois, and some from Indiana, and felt that if they could command a regiment properly and with credit, I could also."

Yates would have recommended his appointment

as a brigadier, but he declined; said he did n't want rank till he had earned it. "What kind of a man is this Captain Grant?" Yates asked a bookkeeper from the Galena store; "though anxious to serve he seems reluctant to take any high position. . . . What does he want?" "The way to deal with him," was the reply, "is to ask him no questions, but simply order him to duty. He will obey promptly." Whereupon Yates wired Grant, then visiting his father at Covington: "You are this day appointed Colonel of the Twenty-first Illinois Volunteers and requested to take command at once." His commission was dated June 16, 1861.

CHAPTER VI

IN COMMAND

GRANT had been set, a month before, to muster in the regiment now put under his command, a raw and ragged lot of country boys, camped near Mattoon, their former colonel, chosen by themselves by reason of his warlike aspect, a former Costa Rican filibuster with a propensity for bowie knives and whiskey, and a way of making daily harangues to his helpless men, dragging his sentries sometimes from their posts for nightly orgies. When it came to serving under him in war, the officers objected, and remembering the quietly effective soldier who had taught them how to drill they asked the Governor to give them Grant. That was how Grant came by his first regiment.

The new commander had no uniform, although he bought one later with three hundred dollars which he borrowed from a friend. His rusty clothes and stooping shoulders contrasted queerly with the military strut of some of the militia colonels. He tells how, when he went to take command, Logan and McClernand, two Democratic Congressmen, both later to be generals of volunteers, went with him to inspire

the backward regiment with military fervor; and he relates how Logan's speech aroused his men to such a pitch that "they would have volunteered to remain 'n the army as long as an enemy of the country continued to bear arms against it." But he neglects to say that after the first burst of oratory, when McClernand presented him as the new colonel, and the men, looking for another thrill, called out, "Grant! Grant!" he simply said, "Go to your quarters," in the clear, carrying, inevitable voice which years before had caught the ears of loiterers on the Bethel Green and which would soon have its incisive way on more tumultuous fields. Nor does he tell how his new regiment, for the first time catching the inflection of control, went to their quarters silently, under the unaccustomed spell.

He drilled and disciplined them for a month. Ordered to the Missouri line, where secession was still struggling for the border State, he marched his men across the country, so as to teach them how, instead of waiting for a train.

His six weeks in Missouri gave him no chance for much of anything, but to his father he confides that his services with the regiment have been "highly satisfactory to me. I took it in a very disorganized, demoralized, and insubordinate condition and have worked it up to a reputation equal to

the best, and, I believe, with the good-will of all the officers and all the men. Hearing that I was likely to be promoted, the officers with great unanimity have requested to be attached to my command. This I don't want you to read to others, for I very much dislike speaking of myself," — a disagreeable restraint for Jesse, whose paternal pride was just beginning to revive.

An incident illuminating in the naïveté with which he tells it: At Mexico, Missouri, where he encamped for several weeks, he had his earliest opportunity to exercise his regiment in battalion drill. "I had never looked at a copy of tactics from the time of my graduation . . . had not been at a battalion drill since 1846. The arms had been changed and Hardee's tactics had been adopted. I got a copy of tactics and studied one lesson, intending to confine the exercise of the first day to the commands I thus learned. I do not believe that the officers of the regiment ever discovered that I had never studied the tactics that I used," — an instance, slight it may be, of the saving common sense which served him all his life for genius. "I never maneuver," he said to Meade before the battle of the Wilderness. "My only points of doubt were as to your knowledge of sound strategy and of books of science and history," Sherman wrote him in a memorable letter, "but I confess your common sense

seems to have supplied all this." And after he had gained his fame he said to a young officer, who would have talked to him of Jomini, that he had never paid much attention to that authority on military strategy. "The art of war is simple enough. Find out where your enemy is. Get at him as soon as you can. Strike at him as hard as you can, and keep moving on."

In his meager library there were no books on war, and he never seemed to care about the strategy of the great generals of history. To him the Civil War with every campaign in it was a problem by itself. His only purpose was to wrest success out of conditions placed before him, with such weapons as were nearest to his hand. The game of war had no attraction for him. "You ask if I should not like to go in the regular army," he writes his father, just after being made a colonel. "I should not. I want to bring my children up to useful employment and in the army the chance is poor."

Another story helps to explain a trait which was of service to him through his life. The first serious task to which his regiment was put was to disperse a band of troops under a guerrilla officer who had become a terror in that part of the State. "As we approached the brow of the hill from which it was expected we could see Harris's camp and possibly

find his men ready formed to meet us, my heart kept getting higher and higher until it felt to me as though it was in my throat. I would have given anything then to have been back in Illinois, but I had not the moral courage to halt and consider what to do; I kept right on. When we reached a point from which the valley was in full view I halted. The place where Harris had been encamped a few days before was still there, and the marks of a recent encampment were plainly visible, but the troops were gone. My heart resumed its place. It occurred to me at once that Harris had been as much afraid of me as I had been of him. This was a view of the question I had never taken before, but it was one I never forgot afterwards. From that event until the close of the war I never experienced trepidation upon confronting an enemy, though I always felt more or less anxiety. I never forgot that he had as much reason to fear my forces as I had his. The lesson was valuable."

It was his first experience in independent and responsible command — and so, according to his own interpretation, he was dubious of the result. Like Grant's other lessons, this was one which he had to learn only once. He never was concerned about the opposition; considered only what he had to do himself. "When I go into battle," Sherman said years

later, "I am always worrying about what the enemy is going to do. Grant never gives a damn!" [1]

[1] General James H. Wilson says that just before the march to the sea, Sherman said to him: "Wilson, I am a damned sight smarter man than Grant; I know a great deal more about war, military history, strategy, and grand tactics than he does; I know more about organization, supply, and administration, and about everything else than he does; but I 'll tell you where he beats me, and where he beats the world. He don't care a damn for what the enemy does out of his sight, but it scares me like hell!" (*Under the Old Flag*, vol. II, p. 17.)

CHAPTER VII

BRIGADIER-GENERAL

John C. Frémont, the "Pathfinder," major-general by reason of a reputation picturesquely gained, a dashing figure, futile in command, yet idolized beyond all other Northern men at the beginning of the war, was at the head of the Department of the West including Illinois, Kentucky, Kansas, and Missouri, with quarters at St. Louis, — which held the key to the strategical control of the Confederacy, — the waters joining there within a radius of a hundred miles to form the great flow of the Mississippi, the sole effective channels for transportation of supplies and troops. McClellan was at Cincinnati. Scott was general-in-chief at Washington and under him the regulars, McDowell, Meigs, and Rosecrans. Grant under Frémont, who had a scant conception of the strategical importance of his own command, was ordered from one place to another in Missouri, knocking his regiment into shape, doing police duty at Ironton, Jefferson City, and Mexico, establishing order here and there; for Claiborne Jackson's State was desultory fighting ground by reason of the close division of the population between the sympathizers with the North

and South. Without formality and by consent, because he was the only educated soldier in the lot of recently created colonels, he found himself commander of an improvised brigade, and then one day in early August, 1861, his chaplain showed him a news paragraph that Lincoln had appointed him a brigadier. "It must be some of Washburne's work," he said.

Elihu B. Washburne, a "down East" Yankee, transplanted early to the West, had been the Congressman from the Galena District since 1852, one of the very earliest Free-Soilers or Republicans to get office, so that when his party gained control, with Lincoln at the head, he was a factor to be reckoned with. Shrewd, forceful, rangy, a fair type of the uncultured politician of his time, serving the public many years in Congress and as Minister to France, he is known chiefly now because Grant was his unknown neighbor at Galena when Lincoln called for troops. He saw Grant handle the Galena company, talked with him about the war and found him full of sense, gave him a note to Yates and kept an eye on him when he became a colonel. His unsought friendship was the nearest thing to "influence" Grant ever had, and Grant was right in guessing that the appointment was "some of Washburne's work."

When Congress met in August and Lincoln had to

send in names of officers for the new army, he gave his own State four brigadiers and asked the delegation in Washington to meet and designate the men. Grant named by Washburne topped the list, receiving every vote. The others named were Hurlbut, Prentiss, and McClernand in the order given; none of whom had a West Point training. Lincoln sent in these names on August 7, together with thirty-three other brigadiers, among whom Grant was number seventeen. Ranking him were Hunter, Heintzelman, Keyes, Fitz-John Porter, Franklin, Sherman, Stone, Buell, Lyon, Pope, Kearny, and Hooker. The major-generals were Scott, McClellan, Frémont, McDowell, and Halleck, regulars, with Dix, Banks, and Butler, volunteers.

Thus at the outset of the war Grant was brigadier, unsponsored it is true, and guiltless of prestige, but placed without his own design with a detached command at the one key by touching which the forces could be set in motion to surround and crush the armies of the South.

Others saw the military value of commanding rivers near the junction of the Ohio and the Mississippi as a first step toward controlling the Mississippi to its mouth. Grant was the only one to see the absolute necessity of doing it at once with just the implements in hand. To him must go the credit of

achieving what the rest only dreamed. He translated into terms of conquest the cry which sounded through the armies of the West: "The Rebels have closed the Mississippi; we must cut our way to the Gulf with our swords!"

CHAPTER VIII

PADUCAH, BELMONT

General Leonidas Polk, the fighting Bishop, commanded the Confederate forces thereabout. Working in harmony with a comprehensive military plan evolved by the trained soldiers of the South, something then lacking in the North, he had set out to gain Kentucky, a border State still split in sympathy between secession and the Union. His eye was fixed on Cairo, at the southern tip of Illinois, where the Ohio joins the Mississippi, a vantage-point of contact with three border States, and with that end in view he seized Columbus, twenty miles below, on the east bank of the Mississippi just above the boundary line between Kentucky and Tennessee. On that very day, September 4, as soon as he could do a task at which Frémont had set him in Missouri, Grant pitched his tent at Cairo.

When he learned that Polk was sending troops to seize Paducah, forty-five miles up the Ohio at the mouth of the Tennessee, — to hold which meant the locking of those rivers as the Mississippi was already locked, — Grant wired Frémont that he would start that night for Paducah if he received no orders to

the contrary, manned his boats, and hearing nothing from headquarters was on his way, seizing the town at daybreak of September 6, anticipating by a few hours Polk's troops which Paducah had hoped to welcome. To reassure the frightened citizens he issued a short proclamation: —

> I have come among you, not as an enemy, but as your friend and fellow citizen, not to injure or annoy you, but to respect the rights and to defend and enforce the rights of all loyal citizens. An enemy, in rebellion against a common government, has taken possession of and planted its guns upon the soil of Kentucky and fired upon your flag. Hickman and Columbus are in his hands. He is moving upon your city. I am here to defend you against this enemy and to assert and maintain the authority and sovereignty of your government and mine. I have nothing to do with opinions. I shall deal only with armed rebellion and its aiders and abettors. You can pursue your usual avocations without fear or hindrance. The strong arm of the government is here to protect its friends, and to punish only its enemies. Whenever it is manifest that you are able to defend yourselves, to maintain the authority of your government, and protect the rights of all its loyal citizens, I shall withdraw the forces under my command from your city.

He left troops at Paducah under General Charles F. Smith, his old commander at West Point and notified the Kentucky Legislature, then playing with "neutrality" at the state capital. The Legislature promptly adopted resolutions favorable to the Union and the State was saved; on his return to Cairo he

found Frémont's authority to take Paducah "if he felt strong enough," a reprimand for corresponding with the Legislature, and a warning against doing it again.

He could have seized Columbus then and wanted to, but Frémont kept him for two months at Cairo, and by November Polk was so intrenched that he was strong enough to hold his own against a siege and to assist the rebel forces in Missouri stirring trouble under Generals Earl Van Dorn and Sterling Price. Besides, by Frémont's order Grant had sent three thousand men under Dick Oglesby to chase guerrillas in Missouri and Oglesby must be protected in the rear.

It was to keep Polk engaged at home that Grant sailed down the river, on November 7, with three thousand men to reconnoiter at a little camp of shanties just opposite Columbus bearing the pretentious name of Belmont, where Polk had put twenty-five hundred men who, resting under the protection of his batteries, were ready for quick expeditions. Instead of simply reconnoitering, Grant, sensing what Polk had in mind, landed with his troops, dispersed the enemy, and seized the camp — his first real fighting for the war. He would have demanded the surrender of the beaten forces and withdrawn, his task completed, had not his green troops, their heads turned by

what seemed a striking victory, become a jubilant mob, ransacking the camp for souvenirs, reddening the day with speeches, cheers, and songs, and uncontrollable till Grant, with genius born of common sense, set matches to the tents, the flames from which invited fire from the Columbus batteries and reinforcements from the fort, giving the enemy a chance to rally. His men, surrounded and attacked, were ready now for orders, but they would have surrendered had not Grant, saying grimly that they had cut their way in and could cut their way out, forced them fighting to the boats, he with a private's blouse, his horse shot under him, embarking last of all and nearly left behind.

McClernand, soldier politician, who was there with Grant, issued a vainglorious address to his command on his return to Cairo. But Grant said nothing save to his father, to whom he wrote next day: "Taking into account the object of the expedition the victory was most complete. It has given me a confidence in the officers and men of this command that will enable me to lead them in any future engagement without fear of the result." The newspapers of Illinois were filled with tales of how McClernand saved the day. Grant let him have his little glory with the folks at home and would not enter on a controversy. It was a local rivalry at best, for neither gen-

eral was known outside the State, and news of Belmont did not excite the East.

The country's gloomy face was turned toward the Potomac and the James, waiting for victories to wipe out Bull Run, while McClellan at the head of his great army was wearing out its patience marching up and down. Belmont with its loss of life was criticized for years as an unnecessary fight. It was not intended for a battle, but a demonstration. If Belmont had not been fought, said Grant years later, "Colonel Oglesby would probably have been captured or destroyed with his three thousand men. Then I should have been culpable indeed."

Besides, we should have missed an episode unique and picturesque, illustrating the peculiar temper of the time.

CHAPTER IX

DONELSON

THIRTEEN more weeks of waiting, not altogether wasted because the time was used in drilling troops at Cairo and teaching officers the ways of war.

There were few regulars in Grant's command. The South had scattered its West Point graduates throughout its service, so that the volunteers had the advantage of instruction by trained officers. The educated soldiers of the North had kept their old commands and rank until the war had lasted many months, and while there was one whole "regular brigade" in the Army of the Potomac, in which every officer, from general to second lieutenant, had been educated in his profession, there were elsewhere entire divisions serving under commanders who had had no military training. Grant, face to face with such conditions, suggested while at Cairo that, except for the staff corps, the regular army should be disbanded and the officers detailed to lead and drill the volunteers, a condition brought about through natural process as the war progressed.

Grant was not alone in trouble with Frémont. Lincoln was having difficulty too. The more Fré-

mont displayed his pompous incapacity, the harder for his chief to handle him, and he was bright enough to play spectacularly upon the anti-slavery sentiment, which looked upon him as the champion of the negro's cause, while those above him would subordinate it if thereby the Union might be saved. On August 30 came the final test of patience. In that morning's paper Lincoln was amazed to read a proclamation issued by Frémont confiscating the property of all persons in Missouri who had taken active part with the enemies of the United States, and declaring free their slaves, — a proclamation hailed with joy throughout the North, but with dismay by the Administration, which knew that Kentucky and the other border States would not hold to the Union if they thought their slaves were to be free.

To Lincoln Frémont's proclamation meant defiance and a usurpation of legislative power, but patiently he asked Frémont to modify it; at Frémont's request issued himself the modifying order, and brought down on his head the North's denunciation with threatenings of impeachment. Some would have made Frémont dictator. "How many times," wrote James Russell Lowell, "are we to save Kentucky and lose our self-respect?" Such was the spirit Lincoln faced in the first months of war. In view of the part politics so largely played in the conduct

of the war, only incorrigible ineptitude could have elicited the order issued two days after Belmont, putting Halleck in Frémont's place.

To Grant the substitution was of little benefit. Halleck, an educated West Point soldier, of great learning, a master of the technique of war, — "Old Brains" they called him, — had been for years a San Francisco lawyer, having seen service in Mexico. He had just been made a major-general of volunteers, and great things were expected of him. He was a pundit, not a fighter; his big head stuffed with strategy, but not alive with wit. He had no aptitude for such emergencies as now confronted him in an unusual kind of war. He never learned what Gibbon had in mind when he declared a century before that "the great battles won by the lessons of tactics may be enumerated by the epic poems composed from the inspirations of rhetoric." To Halleck, Grant, with his plain, practical ideas, was a specimen unclassified, and besides, there was a lurking memory of the way Grant quit the service on the coast.

Grant, left to vegetate at Cairo, weary of inaction, at last sought Halleck out. He had a scheme for opening a roadway through the South and pushing back the first line of defense, which Smith, his old West Point preceptor, had approved, to his great satisfaction, and he thought it merited consideration

higher up. But having grudgingly been granted leave to visit Halleck, he met scant courtesy. "I was received with so little cordiality that I perhaps stated the object of my visit with less clearness than I might have done, and I had not uttered many sentences before I was cut short as if my plan was preposterous. I returned to Cairo very much crestfallen."

The "preposterous" plan was this: Albert Sidney Johnston, in chief command west of the Alleghanies, had established the outward defensive line of the Confederacy in southern Kentucky stretching from Columbus on the Mississippi to the Cumberland Gap in eastern Tennessee. Along this line strongholds had been set up at Fort Henry and Fort Donelson commanding respectively the Tennessee and Cumberland just where those rivers, coming toward each other in the State of Tennessee, begin running parallel through Kentucky to the Ohio. The two forts were only twelve miles apart. Other outposts were at Bowling Green, ninety miles northeast of Donelson, and at Mill Springs, a hundred miles still farther east, guarding the approach to the Cumberland Mountains. Buckner was Confederate commander at Bowling Green, Zollicoffer at Mill Springs. Thomas watching Mill Springs commanded the Union left, Buell at Louisville watching Bowling Green, the Union center; Grant was in command at Cairo on

the Union right; while Polk was at Columbus and Gideon J. Pillow at Donelson — Pillow, whom Grant had known in Mexico, of whom, while still a hanger-on at Springfield, he had written with contempt that, as "he would find it necessary to receive a wound on the first discharge of firearms, he would not be a formidable enemy."

The weak point of the Confederate line was the district including Donelson and Henry, where those two forts alone held back the Federal navy from running up the Cumberland and Tennessee as far as Nashville and Savannah and beyond. General Charles F. Smith, at Paducah, under Grant, commanded the little district at the mouth of these two rivers, and Grant's plan after conference with him and Foote, commander of our queer little fleet, was to sail up the river, seize Fort Henry, and so indent the South's line of defense — forcing the Union front southward to Alabama. Sherman and Buell had thought of this, and spoke of it to Halleck: McClellan, in command at Washington, believed in it on paper, but with his passion for delay thought eastern Tennessee should first be occupied.

"There has been much discussion as to who originated the movement up the Tennessee River," writes Colonel William Preston Johnston, in his biography of his father. "Grant *made* it, and it made Grant."

And Grant himself wrote Washburne, within a month of the event: "I see the credit of attacking the enemy by the way of the Tennessee and Cumberland is variously attributed. It is little to talk about it being the great wisdom of any general that first brought forth this line of attack. Our gunboats were running up the Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers all fall and winter watching the progress of the rebels on these waters. General Halleck no doubt thought of this route long ago, and I am sure I did." But Halleck thought he needed sixty thousand men to carry out whatever dilatory scheme he had in mind, three times as many as there were with Grant, and if an army big enough for Halleck had been handy, he would rather not have picked Grant for the job.

Thomas, in middle January, 1862, took Mill Springs, a rare little victory which gave the North new heart, quite out of keeping with its real significance, and Grant grew more impatient to try out his plan. He wired to Halleck, Foote coöperating, that "if permitted" he could take and hold Fort Henry; and on the 1st of February he was given leave to move. He started the next day, and on the morning of the 6th the fort surrendered, guns abandoned, garrison in full retreat to Donelson. "Fort Henry is ours," he wired to Halleck; "the gunboats silenced the batteries before the investment was completed." Then, with-

out orders or permission, for Halleck, thinking Grant would stay at Henry and intrench it, had never mentioned Donelson to him, he set out for the Cumberland at once, wiring Halleck, "I shall take and destroy Fort Donelson on the 8th and return to Fort Henry." His fifteen thousand men that day, he felt, could do more service than three times the number a month hence against a strengthened garrison.

John B. Floyd, Buchanan's traitorous War Secretary, who the preceding winter had depleted Northern arsenals to strengthen Southern forts, had just been sent by Johnston to command at Donelson; Pillow was under him; Grant knew both, and he was not afraid. It was a cruel week in February, warm by day, then overnight quick snow and sleet, with mercury not far from zero; the Union forces without shelter and inadequately clothed. But Grant with his inferior force invested Donelson, the garrison apparently asleep till on the 15th Floyd and Pillow led out their men. There was a desperate battle, the Union forces beaten back till Grant, who on a gunboat had been counseling with Foote, rode on the field. His men, discouraged, told him the enemy had come out with haversacks and knapsacks as evidence that they were prepared to fight for several days. But he was imperturbable. Examining a haversack he found it filled with three days' rations; supplies

for flight. He realized at once that the despairing garrison, in order to avoid surrender, were cutting their way out. "They have no idea of staying here to fight us," he said; "whichever side attacks first now will win." Convinced of this, he turned his troops against the fort, Smith, Wallace, and McClernand fighting splendidly.

Smith with his men swept up the ridge and seized the rifle-pits; the Southerners were driven back into the fort where that night was enacted a curious, discreditable scene. Pillow and Floyd, with Buckner, who was there with reinforcements, decided at a council that their force must be surrendered. Floyd, under indictment at Washington for embezzling public funds, was obsessed with the belief that if the Yankees captured him, he would be hanged for treason, and the vain Pillow likewise thought the Yankees eager for his head. They begged Buckner, one of the bravest soldiers of the South, to take command, and under cover of the night fled down the Cumberland to Nashville, leaving Buckner to receive the enemy as best he could.

So Buckner sent his flag of truce asking for terms and for an armistice, and Grant sent back the message which electrified the North, "No terms except an unconditional and immediate surrender can be accepted. I propose to move immediately upon your

works"; bringing the prompt response, "The distribution of the forces under my command, incident to an unexpected change of commanders, compel me, notwithstanding the brilliant success of the Confederate arms yesterday, to accept the ungenerous and unchivalrous terms which you propose."

Grant saw Buckner now for the first time since Buckner had helped him in New York when penniless, eight years before. "He said to me that if he had been in command I would not have got up to Donelson as easily as I did. I told him that if he had been in command I should not have tried in the way I did." Grant does not relate an incident, which comes with better grace from Buckner's lips: "He left the officers of his own army and followed me with that modest manner peculiar to himself into the shadow, and there tendered me his purse. . . . In the modesty of his nature he was afraid the light would witness that act of generosity, and sought to hide it from the world."

There is a passage in the "Memoirs" which from every aspect does human nature credit: "General Sherman had been sent to Smithland, at the mouth of the Cumberland River, to forward reinforcements and supplies to me. At that time he was my senior in rank, and there was no authority of law to assign a junior to command a senior of the same grade. But

every boat that came up with supplies or reinforcements brought a note of encouragement from Sherman, asking me to call upon him for any assistance he could render and saying that if he could be of service at the front I might send for him and he would waive rank."

More men fought at Donelson than ever before on American soil save at Bull Run. It was the first substantial victory for the Union forces after nine months of procrastination and defeat. Grant, who had been unknown the week before outside the jurisdiction of his own department, was by a flash on February 17, 1862, the military idol of the day. In "Unconditional Surrender" his countrymen at last had found a rallying cry. Yet they had faint conception of what had really been achieved by Grant in opening the Cumberland and the Tennessee.

CHAPTER X

UNDER A CLOUD

With Donelson and Henry under Grant's control, the whole line from the Appalachians to the Mississippi crumbled like a shell. The indentation carried the Union forces into Nashville, which Johnston, having already abandoned Bowling Green, could no longer hold. Polk had to quit Columbus, and retired to Island No. 10, a hundred miles below. Mill Springs was gone. The Confederacy was pressed back to its second line, reaching easterly from Memphis through Corinth and Chattanooga, and northeasterly through Knoxville along the Cumberland Mountains to Virginia. The Northern people saw one outpost fall and then another, till it seemed to them like wizardry, and in the quick reaction they looked for speedy and complete success. But they took poor account of Vicksburg and the military problems it involved, and they knew little about service jealousies.

All the world was praising Grant but Halleck, who was for praising everybody else. Three days after Donelson he wired to Stanton: "Smith, by his coolness and bravery at Fort Donelson, when the battle was against us, turned the tide and carried the

enemy's outworks. Make him a major-general. You can't get a better one. Honor him for this victory, and the whole country will applaud." Nothing was said of Grant. He wired congratulations to Foote for his work with the fleet and to Hunter, who had simply sent from Kansas prompt reinforcements — but not a word to Grant. Later, when he caught the temper of the North, he wired: "Make Buell, Grant, and Pope major-generals of volunteers." He wired McClellan on the 26th: "I must have command of the armies in the West. Hesitation and delay are losing us the golden opportunity. . . . Answer quick." Neither Buell nor Pope, good soldiers, had seen fighting then, and Halleck never did.

It was a plain discrimination, and Lincoln, appreciating the proprieties, sent in Grant's name alone, as major-general of volunteers dating from February 16. There should be no mistake about the cause of his promotion. Five weeks later came McClernand, Smith, and Wallace, with Buell and Pope; and still later, Thomas, who would have had the earlier recognition he deserved had it not been for Stanton's unaccountable distrust. Grant had now fought his way unfriended to a rank well toward the top.

Now comes a painful episode in Grant's career; Halleck seemed incapable of letting him alone. While still in front of Donelson he had been assigned to the

command of the new military district of West Tennessee, with "Limits not defined." It was uncertain where his jurisdiction overlapped with Buell's; and on the 28th of February, after wiring Halleck that, without orders to the contrary, he should go at once to Nashville, Grant went there to consult with Buell at the place which was to be a center of activity. The next day he returned to Donelson, and on March 3 got orders to move his whole command back to Fort Henry with a view to an expedition up the Tennessee to capture Corinth, the most important outpost in the South's new defensive line, protecting Memphis and Vicksburg upon which Grant for weeks had had his eye.

The next day to his amazement Halleck wired: "You will place Major-General C. F. Smith in command of the expedition and remain yourself at Fort Henry. Why do you not obey my orders to report strength and position of your command?" He had not disobeyed any order, had reported daily the condition of his command, had reported every position occupied, and so wired Halleck; but on the 6th came this reply: "Your neglect of repeated orders to report the strength of your command has created great dissatisfaction and seriously interfered with military plans. Your going to Nashville without authority, and when your presence with your troops was of the

utmost importance, was a matter of very serious complaint at Washington, so much so that I was advised to arrest you on your return."

"I did all I could to get you returns of the strength of my command," Grant, mystified, wired back. "Every move I made was reported daily to your chief of staff, who must have failed to keep you properly posted. I have done my very best to obey orders and to carry out the interests of the service. If my course is not satisfactory remove me at once. I do not wish in any way to impede the success of our arms. . . . My going to Nashville was strictly intended for the good of the service, and not to gratify any desire of my own. Believing sincerely that I must have enemies between you and myself who are trying to impair my usefulness, I respectfully ask to be relieved from further duty in the department."

Then followed daily messages between the two; Grant urging that he be relieved, Halleck retreating slowly from his stand; and finally, when ordered by the President summarily to send a full report to Washington, retracting grudgingly, restoring Grant to his command. "As he acted from a praiseworthy although mistaken zeal for the public service in going to Nashville and leaving his command," he wired the Adjutant-General on March 13, "I respectfully recommend that no further notice be taken of it."

In his dispatches to Grant, Halleck had let the responsibility for the misadventure rest with McClellan, and Grant accordingly was duly grateful to Halleck for having set him right. After the war the truth came out through McClellan's revelation of Halleck's original complaint.[1]

"I have had no communication with General Grant for more than a week," he had wired McClellan on March 2. "He left his command without my authority and went to Nashville. His army seems to be as much demoralized by the victory of Fort Donelson as was that of the Potomac by the defeat of Bull Run. It is hard to censure a successful general immediately after a victory, but I think he richly deserves it. I can get no returns, no reports, no information of any kind from him. Satisfied with his victory he sits down and enjoys it without regard to the future. I am worn out and tired with this neglect and inefficiency. C. F. Smith is almost the only officer equal to the emergency."

To this McClellan replied: "The success of our cause demands that proceedings such as Grant's should be at once checked. Generals must observe discipline as well as private soldiers. Do not hesitate to arrest him at once if the good of the service requires it, and place C. F. Smith in command. You

[1] *McClellan's Own Story*, p. 216.

are at liberty to regard this as a positive order if it will smooth your way." In replying to which Halleck intimated, perhaps, the real secret of his dislike: "A rumor has just reached me that since the taking of Fort Donelson Grant has resumed his former bad habits. If so it will account for his repeated neglect of my oft-repeated orders. I do not deem it advisable to arrest him at present, but have placed General Smith in command of the expedition up the Tennessee. I think Smith will restore order and discipline."

Grant subsequently learned that some of his reports to Halleck had been held up at Cairo, but this mishap would not excuse his summary execution without a chance to enter a defense.

There is a nice adjustment of justice with delicacy of feeling in this comment in his "Memoirs": "General Halleck unquestionably deemed General C. F. Smith a much fitter officer for the command of all the forces in the military district than I was, and, to render him available for such command, desired his promotion to antedate mine and those of the other division commanders. It is probable that the general opinion was that Smith's long services in the army and distinguished deeds rendered him the most proper person for such command. Indeed, I was rather inclined to this opinion myself at that time, and would have served as faithfully under Smith as

he had done under me. But this did not justify the dispatches which General Halleck sent to Washington or his subsequent concealment of them from me when pretending to explain the action of my superiors."

In disgrace at Fort Henry, Grant had congratulated Smith on turning over the command and wrote him, "Anything you may require, send back transports for and if within my power you shall have it." There could be no jealousy between Grant and Smith. Grant's feeling for his old commander was almost one of awe, and when Smith first had come under his command he found it hard to give him orders. It was for the elder in service, now lower in rank, to relieve Grant's embarrassment. "I am now a subordinate," he delicately said; "I know a soldier's duty. I hope you will feel no awkwardness about our new relations." Smith died in a few weeks from hardships at Fort Donelson. He was too ill to serve at Shiloh. Sherman said once that if "Smith had been spared us Grant would never have been heard of"; he subsequently took it back, but with this early estimate Grant would then have agreed.

CHAPTER XI

SHILOH

"My opinion was and still is that immediately after the fall of Fort Donelson the way was opened to the National forces all over the Southwest without much resistance. If one general who would have taken the responsibility had been in command of all the troops west of the Alleghanies, he could have marched to Chattanooga, Corinth, Memphis, and Vicksburg with the troops we then had; and as volunteering was going on rapidly over the North there would soon have been force enough at all those centers to operate offensively against any body of the enemy that might be found near them. . . . Providence ruled differently. Time was given the enemy to collect armies and fortify his new positions." Thus Grant has placed himself on record, and thus it might have happened with Grant himself or Charles F. Smith in sole command, but not with Halleck.

Having smashed the South's defensive line at Donelson, the armies of the West turned next to Corinth, a little town in northern Mississippi of strategical importance because two railroads came together there which, thus connecting, brought Memphis on

the Mississippi and Mobile on the Gulf in touch with Charleston and the South Atlantic States. So long as the Confederates had Corinth, they had the base for a campaign to keep the lower Mississippi under their control and hold the Northern forces back. Beauregard, summoned from Virginia with the prestige of success, was there already and other generals were on the way — all to be under the command of Albert Sidney Johnston, still in good favor with the Cabinet at Richmond in spite of the catastrophe at Donelson and his enforced retreat. When men from Tennessee asked for another general, Davis had replied: "If Sidney Johnston is not a general, the Confederacy has none to give you." Centering at Corinth were nearly fifty thousand men.

Halleck had formed ambitious plans. Commanding all the armies in the West he was to lead in person the armies of the Tennessee and the Ohio, with Grant and Buell serving under him. He would have chosen Charles F. Smith instead of Grant if Washington had let him, but Smith was laid up at Savannah on the Tennessee, sick with the injury received at Donelson of which he shortly died.

The move on Corinth was to be assault by Halleck's armies; but events precipitated battle on a field where Grant and Halleck had not planned to fight. Smith, while Grant was undergoing punish-

ment at Halleck's hands, had chosen as a rendezvous for the Union armies a bluff at Pittsburg Landing, twenty miles northeast of Corinth on the west bank of the Tennessee, preferring that place to Savannah, on the eastern bank and nine miles farther north, as Halleck had designed. Grant picked the Landing also on the theory that, as the plan was to attack and crush the enemy, the west side of the river was the place from which to strike. It would never do to let the Southern troops possess the bluff. He would wait there for Buell, when their united forces could advance on Corinth. His troops were at the Landing, but he continued temporary quarters for himself at Savannah where Buell was expected hourly to arrive.

But Beauregard and Johnston, instead of waiting for attack at Corinth where they were intrenched, moved down the river to the western bank in order to catch Grant before Buell could arrive; and on a muddy, foggy Sunday morning, April 6, 1862, Johnston's army of forty thousand, under cover of the forest and the night having come up to the Union lines, brought on one of the deadliest battles of the war. McClernand, Sherman, Hurlbut, Prentiss, and William Wallace, who was temporarily commanding Smith's division, were encamped around Pittsburg Landing. Others were close at hand, — Lew Wal-

lace at Crump's Landing, five miles below; Nelson, one of Buell's generals, who had arrived the day before, camped near Savannah on the eastern bank; thirty thousand men in all potentially at Grant's disposal, while Buell with as many more was on the way. McClernand and Lew Wallace were major-generals, the rest brigadiers.

Grant, for two days on crutches from a fall, was at Savannah looking for Buell whom he expected there that day; at breakfast he heard the firing at the front and started on a boat at once for Pittsburg Landing where he found the battle on. The Union camp was not intrenched. The Western armies had not learned the habit then; while Grant, convinced like all the rest, that Johnston would make his stand at Corinth, thought his raw troops would be less advantageously employed in digging than in drill and discipline. The Southern troops poured in over an exposed line about three miles from Pittsburg near a log-cabin meeting-house called Shiloh, where Sherman was encamped; and here the battle raged ferociously, giving a name to the day's engagement.

Sherman's men, experiencing their first battle, thrown into confusion and losing their identity as a division, mixed themselves with McClernand's troops; and two divisions, scrambled into one, took orders indiscriminately from the two command-

ers, so desperate was the fight defying all the rules of war. Thus the battle went in all parts of the field, and thus Grant found it when he reached the scene.

In the wild combat he was imperturbable as he had been at Donelson. "I can recall only two persons," writes Horace Porter, "who throughout a rattling fire of musketry always sat in their saddles without moving a muscle or winking an eye: one was a bugler and the other was General Grant." He rode from place to place wherever bullets flew and gave commands, as was his way, in a low, vibrant, penetrating voice, alert but undemonstrative; there was no mad rushing back and forth, no stirring calls to action; he might be beaten, but he could not be perturbed. The odds throughout were with the South. Lew Wallace, with seven thousand men, mistook his road and did not reach the field until late afternoon when the exhausted armies were welcoming the night. Prentiss was captured with his improvised brigade after a day of desperate fighting at the "Hornet's Nest." Nelson did not cross the river. Just who was blameworthy for these mishaps has been the theme of controversy ever since.

As night approached, the Confederates had the best of it. They held the ground where Sherman's troops had slept the night before. The Union army,

mercilessly battered, had been forced toward the river, beneath the bank of which thousands of panic-stricken stragglers chased to the rear were swarming.

There have been few great battles with so little planning. Grant in command could not coördinate his forces or direct them from a given vantage-point. He must be where he could best be of service, now with Sherman, now with McClernand, now with Prentiss in the "Hornet's Nest," reorganizing, re-adjusting, realigning, ceaselessly encouraging first one brigade and then another, inspiring them with his indomitable will.

The enemy were superior in numbers and not inferior in ability to fight. If in the middle of the afternoon the knightly Johnston had not fallen while rallying his men, no one can guess what might have happened. The South has said that his death turned the tide of battle; Jefferson Davis wrote years later that "the fortunes of a country hung by the single thread of the life that was yielded on the field of Shiloh." The world will never know.

When Beauregard at sunset issued his order to suspend the fight till morning, Braxton Bragg, who was for risking everything upon a grand attack that night, declared to the staff officer who brought the message, that if it had not already reached the other generals he would not obey it, and added dismally, "The

battle is lost." But Beauregard always held that he was right, which is to-day the general view.

Bragg would have fought ahead upon the theory that when opposing forces seemingly have spent their strength, the one which gathers first its lagging energies for a renewed assault is almost sure to win. That was the theory of which Grant gave a striking demonstration the next morning, and on which he turned the day at Donelson, which was a fundamental feature of his strategy; but it must presuppose that in power of endurance the enemy does not excel, and that was not the case at Shiloh.

With fewer men the Federal brigades had obstinately disputed every foot of ground since morning, though taken where they had not thought to meet the enemy in formidable force, and that too without adequate formation. Lew Wallace had just reached the battered right with his seven thousand unscathed veterans. Nelson was on the opposite bank and Buell's army was already landing from the transports, while Beauregard had no reserves in sight. He had been held back two hours at the "Hornet's Nest" by Prentiss and William Wallace, and after Wallace had been killed and Prentiss captured, with two thousand men, he had been impeded by having to send captives to the rear. When night fell the time had passed when he could hope to seize the Union

line by assault and cut off Grant's communication with approaching reinforcements. Bragg was right when he declared the battle lost, but he was doubtless wrong in thinking a final charge could save it.

Grant, so constituted that he could not know when he was beaten, had never doubted ultimate success, and when the armies bivouacked for the night, sleeping on their arms because the rebels had their tents, he had already planned to knit his line of battle and with fresh troops drive back the enemy.

To Buell, who had reached Pittsburg Landing hours in advance of his men that Sunday afternoon, and saw the stragglers huddled by the thousand on the bank, defeat seemed imminent. "What preparations have you made for retreat?" he asked Grant. "I have n't despaired of whipping them yet," said Grant. "Of course! But if you should be whipped, how will you get your men across the river? These transports will not take more than ten thousand troops." "If I have to retreat, ten thousand will be as many as I shall need transports for."

Brutal indifference to human life it seemed; and when the news of Union losses came, — twelve thousand men, wounded or killed, — the Northern press began to call him "Butcher Grant." But that night with his aching leg he could not bear the sights and sounds in the shelter of the shanty where he tried

to sleep and where they had brought the wounded, but went out in the mud and driving rain to get what sleep he could, propped up against a tree. He has said of the one bull-fight he ever witnessed, "the sight to me was sickening." He could not bear the sight of blood or that of other men in pain, and he has written that one reason why, after the second day at Shiloh, he did not pursue the beaten enemy, was that he had not the heart to demand more work of his own jaded men; which may be set with Sherman's whimsical reply when John Fiske asked him why the rebels were not chased: "I assure you, my dear fellow, we had had quite enough of their society for two whole days, and were only too glad to be rid of them on any terms";[1] and Buell's bitter comment: "I make no attempt to excuse myself or blame others when I say that General Grant's troops, the lowest individual among them not more than the commander himself, appear to have thought the object of the battle was sufficiently accomplished when they were reinstated in their camps; and that in some way that idea obstructed the organization of my line until a further advance that day became impracticable."

Certain it is the Southern forces were badly thrashed that second day. Beauregard must have realized that they would lose before the battle was

[1] *The Mississippi Valley in the Civil War*, p. 99.

renewed because he must have known that his depleted lines could not contend on equal terms against Grant's army reinforced by Wallace, with Buell's fresh divisions hourly pouring in. By four o'clock the remnant of his shattered force was in retreat toward Corinth. He had lost in missing, dead, and wounded over twelve thousand troops. The Union loss was equal, besides the capture of Prentiss and his force, but Grant and Buell had more men to spare.

"I saw an open field in our possession on the second day," writes Grant, "over which the Confederates had made repeated charges the day before, so covered with dead that it would have been possible to walk across the clearing, in any direction, stepping on dead bodies, without a foot touching the ground. . . . On one part . . . bushes had grown up, some to the height of eight or ten feet. There was not one of these left standing unpierced by bullets."

In the grewsome light of evidence like this of gallant and grim encounter, there is a Gascon touch in what Beauregard wrote to Grant from Corinth, when asking leave to bury his dead: "At the close of the conflict yesterday, my forces being exhausted by the extraordinary length of time during which they were engaged with yours . . . I felt it my duty to withdraw my troops from the immediate scene of conflict."

And now came Halleck ponderously from his arm-chair in St. Louis, to assume direct command four days after the battle had been won. He found awaiting him an army of one hundred thousand men, Pope, by the capture of Island No. 10, having opened the Mississippi down to Memphis and joined his army to those of Grant and Buell. With this great army, after prodigiously elaborate preparation, Halleck crept stealthily toward Corinth, where Beauregard was lingering with fifty thousand, covered the distance in a month, intrenching daily, keeping his army busy with axes, picks, and shovels, holding back his generals eager for a fight, and finally closed in triumphantly, only to find an empty town, which Beauregard had never meant to hold and had quit long before, leaving wooden guns frowning over useless earthworks to deceive the Federal commander. Beauregard knew, like almost everybody else, that Corinth had been captured when his assault at Shiloh failed.

"After all," Halleck admitted finally to Grant, "you fought at Pittsburg Landing the battle of Corinth!"

CHAPTER XII

HUMILIATION

While his superior was crawling through his evolutions, Grant underwent a cruel test of loyalty and patience. After Shiloh a storm of hot denunciation broke upon him. He could have been in hardly worse repute had he betrayed his country. If he were really guilty of a lapse he paid a bitter price.

The first reports of Shiloh to reach the North were those of hostile critics, inspired in part by envious rivals. Buell's men were quick to say that only their arrival saved Grant's army and that the triumph of the second day belonged to them. McClernand, ready with his pen, wrote home, as after Donelson and Belmont, claiming the glory of the day. The Sunday skulkers on the river-bank thought everybody else had also run away, and told this tale wherever they could hold a listener among the gullible and sympathetic visitors to camp. The Northern press defiled itself with slander: Grant was drunk before the battle and while it was on, loafing behind and letting others fight; Prentiss and his men had been caught sleeping in their tents and bayoneted in their beds; thousands of Northern volunteers had been slaughtered wantonly.

Fed by such tales the Western States, whose troops had suffered most, were glad when Halleck came, remodeling the army, now reinforced to more than one hundred thousand men, into three great divisions, one under Buell, one under Thomas, one under Pope — Grant looking on as "second in command" with no one subject to his order except his personal staff. Thus it was while Halleck crept toward Corinth, and then, "Why not press on to Vicksburg before it can be strengthened?" he suggested, bringing from Halleck the rebuke, "When your advice is needed it will be asked." For Halleck thought the aim of war was to get places, and Corinth was a place; while Grant was taught at Shiloh that the South could not be conquered until its armies were destroyed and its resources gone, and to seize Vicksburg promptly would give the Union army the Mississippi, cut off the Southern sources of supply from the Southwest and Mexico, and hasten the contraction and compression of the rebel forces to receive the final crushing blow. Vicksburg once captured, Corinth would again become a railroad junction — nothing more.

And so with each strategic point; to Grant its only value was as a resting-place from which to spring upon the next. To hold it longer wasted men who could be put to stouter service somewhere else. But

Halleck clung to Corinth, letting Vicksburg wait until the Southern armies gathered strength for its defense; so that what might have been accomplished in a month by swift advances called after Shiloh for a year's campaign with grueling encounters over a broad field, while Corinth itself, which fell to Halleck unresisted in early May, was held by Rosecrans the next October only after one of the historic battles of the war. "I think the enemy will continue his retreat, which is all I desire," was Halleck's message while Beauregard was trekking south. Hence no precautions against the prospect of the enemy's recovery and return.

So Grant lay rusting in his tent while Halleck dawdled and the critics bawled; not sulky or resentful, but chafing inwardly and sick at heart that a great opportunity should pass which he thought he knew how to seize. Orders were sent his troops without his knowledge. Reports of his subordinates at Shiloh were forwarded to Washington without passing through his hands. On the strength of his unselfish praise Halleck asked higher rank for Sherman, but did not mention Grant by name.

"The President desires to know," wired Stanton, "whether any neglect or misconduct of General Grant or any other officer contributed to the sad casualties that befell our forces on Sunday"; to which

Halleck significantly replied: "The casualties were due in part to the bad conduct of officers utterly unfit for their places. . . . I prefer to express no opinion in regard to the conduct of individuals till I receive reports of commanders of divisions" — evasive save by insinuation.

Grant asked to be relieved from duty altogether and have his command defined. "You have precisely the position to which your rank entitles you . . ." replied Halleck. "For the last three months I have done everything in my power to ward off the attacks which were made upon you." Sherman heard from Halleck that Grant had leave to go away — Sherman who had no fame till Shiloh, except the tale that he was crazy because at the beginning of the war the press had quoted him as saying that to occupy Kentucky would take two hundred thousand men, and who had just begun to love and prize the silent soldier whose traits were in such contrast to his own. He rode straightway to Grant's headquarters and asked why he was going. "Sherman, you know," said Grant, "You know that I am in the way here. I have stood it as long as I can." Where was he going? "To St. Louis." Had he any business there? "Not a bit." Then Sherman argued, his own case in mind, that if he went, the war would go right on and he would be left out; while if he stayed, some acci-

dent might bring him back to favor and his true place.[1]

Grant stayed, but found it irksome. The flunkeys at headquarters still ignored him; the attacks at home persisted; Congress debated him. John Sherman in the Senate almost alone dared come to his defense, drawing upon himself the angry protest of Harlan, of Iowa, against this "attempt to bolster up Grant's reputation." "The Iowa troops," said Harlan, "have no confidence in his capacity and fitness for the high position he now holds. They regard him as the author of the useless slaughter of many hundreds of their brave comrades. . . . There is nothing in his antecedents to justify a further trial of his military skill. . . . At Belmont he committed an egregious and unpardonable military blunder. . . . At Fort Donelson the right wing . . . under his immediate command was defeated and driven back. . . . The battle was restored by General Smith. . . . On the battlefield of Shiloh his army was completely surprised . . . and nothing but the stubborn bravery of the men fighting by regiments and brigades saved the army from utter destruction. The battle was afterwards restored and conducted by General Buell and other generals. . . . With such a record, those who continue General Grant in an active command will in

[1] *Memoirs of W. T. Sherman*, vol. I, p. 283.

my opinion carry on their skirts the blood of thousands of their slaughtered countrymen."

The riot of detraction stirred the War Department and the White House. It was then that Lincoln met the plea of powerful delegations that Grant should be relieved from duty, with the not-to-be-forgotten answer, "I can't spare this man — he fights!"

After two months Halleck restored Grant to a separate command, and Grant betook himself to Memphis, lately fallen into Union hands with the capitulation of Island No. 10 and Corinth. There, having fixed his headquarters, he remained, still rusticated, but no longer stung by daily slights in front of Halleck's armies, till there came one of the fantastic shifts which were so frequent in the first months of the war.

Things were in sad odor in Virginia — McClellan forced back to the James by Lee had shattered Lincoln's faith, and Lincoln, casting around in his perplexity for military competence, called Halleck from the West to Washington, ordering on July 11 that he "be assigned to command the whole land forces of the United States as General-in-Chief," for Halleck was in nominal command of all the armies of the West, by whom the only Union victories had been won.

"In leaving this department," he wired to Stanton,

"shall I relinquish the command to next in rank, or will the President designate who is to be the commander?" Stanton wired to turn the army over to the next in rank — and Halleck ordered Grant to come to Corinth.

"Shall I bring my staff?" Grant asked. "You can do as you please," was the response. "Corinth will be your headquarters."

There he set up his camp with fifty thousand men to hold the district between Corinth and Cairo, Halleck's big army having been broken up; and, through the summer, under orders, he lay still. He would have been forgotten, so fickle is fame gained in war, had it not been for the dispute concerning Shiloh which had spasmodic life with politicians and the press of the Middle Western States. He suffered keenly, but in silence, except with Sherman, who had won his confidence and who was in command at Memphis; with Washburne, to whom as his one friend in Washington he felt some explanation due; and with his father, sputtering with parental indignation, writing and talking in his defense among his old friends near his boyhood home.

"I would scorn being my own defender against such attacks," he wrote to Washburne in early May, "except through the record which has been kept of all my official acts. . . . To say that I have not been

distressed at these attacks would be false; for I have a father, mother, wife, and children who read them and are distressed by them, and I necessarily share with them in it. Then, too, all subject to my orders read these charges, and it is calculated to weaken their confidence in me, and weaken my ability to render efficient service in our present cause. . . . I cannot be driven from rendering the best service within my ability to suppress the present rebellion. . . . Notoriety has no charms for me. . . . Looking back at the past I cannot see for the life of me any important point that could be corrected."

To his father he writes in August: "I do not expect nor want the support of the Cincinnati press on my side. Their course has been so remarkable from the beginning that should I be endorsed by them I should fear that the public would mistrust my patriotism. I am sure that I have but one desire in this war and that is to put down the rebellion. I have no hobby of my own with regard to the negro either to effect his freedom or to continue his bondage. . . . I do not believe even in the discussion of the propriety of laws and official orders by the army. One enemy at a time is enough and when he is subdued, it will be time enough to settle personal differences."

Just before Corinth, in September, he writes his father one of the few letters in which there is a sign

of petulance. "I . . . have never had any other feeling either here or elsewhere but that of success. I would write you many particulars, but you are so imprudent that I dare not trust you with them; and while on this subject let me say a word. I have not an enemy in the world who has done me so much injury as you in your efforts in my defense. I require no defenders and for my sake let me alone. I have heard this from various sources, and persons who have returned to this army and did not know that I had parents living near Cincinnati have said that they found the best feeling existing toward me in every place except there. You are constantly denouncing other general officers, and the inference with people naturally is that you get your impressions from me. Do nothing to correct what you have already done, but for the future keep quiet on this subject."

Almost brutal in the directness of the rebuke, such words could have been forced from Grant only by deep feeling long suppressed. And yet how tame compared with Sherman's fire, who wrote home with his wounded hand: "It is outrageous for the cowardly newspapers thus to defame men whose lives are exposed." For Sherman's anger burned and blazed against the "little whip-snappers who represent the press, but are in fact spies in our camps," warning

that "death awaits them whenever I have the power" — Sherman of whom Charles Eliot Norton said to Curtis, "How his wrath swells and grows . . . he writes as well as he fights."

CHAPTER XIII

THE MISSISSIPPI CAMPAIGN

HEADED toward Vicksburg in command, at last Grant had the chance he had been looking for, though handicapped by the dispersion of a splendid army and by the dilatory tactics which gave the enemy an opportunity to fortify and man the place. His strategy in following a line of conquest which paralleled the Mississippi, compelling the evacuation of the hostile river strongholds one by one, had cleared the water highway for the fleet of Union gunboats all the way down from Cairo. Paducah, Henry, Donelson, and Shiloh, in giving the Union armies the Tennessee as far south as Nashville and beyond to Corinth, had also transferred to their control Columbus, Memphis, Fort Pillow, and Island No. 10; for though Island No. 10 was seized by Pope while Shiloh was in fight, it would have dropped into his hands without resistance if he had waited a few days.

Farragut had seized New Orleans three weeks after Shiloh and Butler was earning his sobriquet of "Beast" as military governor of the town. Farragut's boats could ply the river as far north as fortified Port Hudson, while those of Davis could convey supplies to feed the Federal armies as far south as

Vicksburg. Thus these two strongholds still in rebel hands were of the utmost value to the Southern cause. Not only did they cut in two the Union navy, but they controlled the gateway to the granary of the South, in Arkansas, Texas, and Louisiana, rich enough in soil to feed the Southern armies and rich enough in men to reinforce them with one hundred thousand fresh recruits. The Red River, running through Texas and Louisiana, emptied into the Mississippi below Vicksburg and above Port Hudson. To close its mouth against the contributions of the territory which it drained and to open up the Mississippi from Cairo to the Gulf was a high stake to play for, and Grant was not the only general who had it in his eye, although no other set such store upon the need of speed in forcing the assault.

Now that he was on the road to the achievement, he chafed with waiting. The enemy had been greatly reinforced while Halleck loitered and were now trying to regain part of the ground which they had lost. Iuka and Corinth were saved by Ord and Rosecrans only after fierce attack by Sterling Price and Earl Van Dorn. Vicksburg, which had been lightly manned and thinly fortified in April, had been growing stouter every day till it was now well-nigh impregnable. Nature had guarded it on the north by swamps, bayous, and shallow lakes through which

invading armies could not hope to force their way; on the west by a steep bluff two hundred feet in height, from which its batteries could rain a plunging fire upon the rash fleet which should undertake assault and up to which no ship could hope to train its guns; on the south by the promontories of Port Hudson and Grand Gulf, by this time manned and fortified till they were strongholds in themselves. The sole approach was from the west and there the strengthened Southern armies intervened, Van Dorn for his defeat at Corinth, for which he was not really culpable, having given place to Pemberton, a Pennsylvanian by birth, trained at West Point, a rebel out of friendship for the Confederate President, who gave him rank above his seniors and responsible command unjustified by service or by the event.

Grant's first plan was to parallel the river without approaching it, just as from Paducah to Pittsburg Landing, compelling Vicksburg's fall, as he had forced the fall of all the other strongholds between Vicksburg and Cairo by seizing points of vantage along the Tennessee. He would abandon Corinth as no longer necessary, now that its railroad connections were in his hands and press hard on the rebel forces which protected Vicksburg.

Having in mind the moss-grown axiom of war that a great army in a hostile country should have a base

to which it could fall back in case of need, he fixed Columbus as his base and deserting Corinth marched his force along the Mississippi Central Railroad from Grand Junction to Grenada, while Sherman with Memphis for a base moved down the Mississippi on transports to effect a landing at the bluffs just north of Vicksburg and thus coöperate with Grant, who hoped to keep the enemy engaged while Sherman captured Vicksburg by assault. When he set out, both he and Sherman, with whom he talked it out at Oxford, would have chosen rather to move in full force on Jackson, the Mississippi capital, using Memphis as a base, but the Mississippi Central Railroad, which ran from Memphis to Jackson, had been torn up between Memphis and Grenada, and to wait for its repair would eat up time, already grown too dear. Even as it was the time was wasted. Grant kept getting mystic messages from Washington whose meaning did not dawn on him till after the event. Forrest with his cavalry left Bragg in front of Rosecrans at Murfreesboro, and darting through the State of Tennessee cut Grant's communication with Columbus by spoiling sixty miles of railroad and leveling the telegraph, so that Grant, completely isolated and unable even to tell Sherman of his plight, had to work slowly back living off the country during the eighty miles' retreat, since Holly

Springs, where stores had been accumulated for an emergency, was at that moment surrendered to Van Dorn, who in a quick dash from the rear had found a coward in command. Grant, after three weeks' isolation, again in touch with Memphis on January 8, learned that Sherman ten days before had been beaten back in his assault upon the bluffs near Vicksburg, and that McClernand was in command of the Mississippi River expedition, supplanting Sherman on the strength of Lincoln's order.

It was now midwinter and nothing had been gained since spring except experience, though Grant's offensive had at least diverted Forrest's cavalry from Bragg, likewise ten thousand men whom Bragg sent to help Pemberton, thus weakening his own force and doubtless giving Rosecrans the victory in the close-fought battle of Stone River, January 1, which opened up the way for Missionary Ridge and Chattanooga, the possession of Knoxville and Atlanta, and Sherman's march through Georgia.

CHAPTER XIV

McCLERNAND

McClernand's plottings and ambitions, his rivalry and jealousy of Grant, comprise a curious chapter of the time — one of the episodes of Grant's career which seem to indicate a hovering Providence. Nothing but unfaltering faith and an unswerving loyalty could have enabled him to meet unquestioning the obstacles he faced, especially those set before him early in the war before his fame was fixed. The brigadiers from Illinois whom Lincoln named with him at the beginning had been tangled in his fortunes ever since. Though he outranked them by coming earliest on the list, they held themselves as his superiors. Why not? Newly arrived, he had been selling leather in Galena only four months ago, while they had long been men of much repute. At that stage of the war a regiment was like a militant town meeting. To stand high in politics marked one as fitted for command. When Prentiss in Missouri found himself subordinate to Grant, he quit in anger, flashing hotly, "I will not serve under a drunkard!" — but came back later, fought under Grant at Donelson and Shiloh, and gallantly on many other fields. Hurlbut marred a creditable record with

wearisome complaints. McClernand represented Lincoln's town in Congress — a Douglas Democrat. It was important at the outbreak of the war that he and Logan should stand by the Union cause, and Lincoln, always politic, courted their favor. Had it not been for his self-seeking vanity McClernand might have left a record to compare with Logan's, but his ambition overleaped itself. Scheming for praise at home, he claimed such glory as there was at Belmont, Donelson, and Shiloh, filling the local press with tributes to his valor, poisoning the mails with scandal about Grant, presuming on a neighbor's privilege to make reports direct to Lincoln, intriguing for a separate command, and now, when Vicksburg was in sight, running to Washington with a presumptuous plan for self-aggrandizement. He was to organize an independent expedition to clear the Mississippi to New Orleans, picking up Vicksburg on the way, and for this purpose Lincoln ordered him to raise the necessary troops in Indiana, Iowa, and Illinois. In patriotic fervor of appeal McClernand could not be excelled. He swiftly garnered forty thousand volunteers, and by the time Grant started south with Sherman was prepared to enter on a conquering career. "I have a greater general now than either Grant or Sherman," Lincoln said to Admiral Porter; but in issuing his order to McClernand he

cautiously refrained from giving him the free hand which McClernand sought, providing that "when a sufficient force not required by the operations of General Grant's command shall be raised, an expedition may be organized under General McClernand's command against Vicksburg and to clear the Mississippi River and open navigation to New Orleans." It was this order which lay behind the disconcerting messages Grant had from Halleck. McClernand thought it gave him equal place with Grant. His error did not dawn upon him till, after superseding Sherman, having gained a foothold in Arkansas, and encouraged thus to undertake the wanton task of leading thirty thousand men to clear the State of rebel troops, he was called back summarily by Grant, aghast at the proposal to divert so great a segment of his army from the immediate work in hand. Grant wired to Halleck that McClernand had "gone on a wild-goose chase"; McClernand, sullenly obedient, wrote confidentially to Lincoln, "My success here is gall and wormwood to the clique of West Pointers who have been persecuting me for months"; Sherman, who six months before had steadied Grant, now, wounded to the quick, wrote to his brother John: "Mr. Lincoln intended to insult me and the military profession by putting McClernand over me, and I would have quietly folded up my things and gone to

St. Louis only I know in times like these all must submit to insult and infamy if necessary." Of the three generals, Grant was the one to hold his poise.

Embarrassing as was the controversy with McClernand, its ultimate result was to make Grant in person assume the task of taking Vicksburg instead of leaving it to Sherman, who otherwise would have been chosen for the work and who would not have followed without specific orders the plans Grant had in mind; but unless he changed his nature it was inevitable that McClernand should be relieved from a command which brought him into conflict with his superior. So long as he remained with Grant he was profanely insubordinate, lingered behind when ordered to advance; arranged spectacular reviews when fighting was at hand, cumbered himself with wagons when told to leave them in the rear, continued firing when instructed to harbor ammunition, swore at Wilson, who brought him directions from Grant, "I 'll be God damned if I will do it — I am tired of being dictated to."

Finally he issued a vainglorious order to his corps congratulating them for gallantry in an assault on Vicksburg which did not succeed and taking other corps to task for failure to coöperate. He sent this on to Illinois for publication without submitting it to Grant, and for this gross breach of discipline, resented

angrily by Sherman and McPherson and their men, Grant sent him home to Springfield, relieving him summarily from his command. From Springfield three months later he sent to Washington a virulent letter requesting a court of inquiry. "How far General Grant is indebted to the forbearance of officers under his command for his retention in the public service so long," he wrote, "I will not undertake to state unless he should challenge it. None know better than himself how much he is indebted to their forbearance. Neither will I undertake to show that he is indebted to the good conduct of officers and men of his command at different times for the series of successes that have gained him applause, rather than to his merit as a commander, unless he should challenge it too." When this attack reached Washington, it was too late to do Grant any harm. The President would not consent to an inquiry, taking the ground that it "would necessarily withdraw from the field many officers whose presence with their commander is absolutely indispensable to the service and whose absence might cause irreparable injury to the success of active operations now in active progress."

"McClernand played himself out," Sherman wrote home the day after Vicksburg fell, "and there is not an officer or soldier here but rejoices he is gone

away. With an intense selfishness and love of notoriety he could not let his mind get beyond the limits of his vision, and therefore all was brilliant about him and dark and suspicious beyond. My style is the reverse. I am somewhat blind to what occurs near me, but have a clear perception of things and events remote. Grant possesses the happy medium, and it is for this reason I admire him. I have a much quicker perception of things than he, but he balances the present and remote so evenly that results follow in natural course."

CHAPTER XV

VICKSBURG

SHERMAN'S rebuff near Vicksburg revived the storm of criticism and stirred the Northern press to new attacks on Grant, as well as on other Union generals East and West. The story in Virginia had been one of procrastination and defeat and now the gleam of hope in Mississippi seemed to have vanished too. McClernand's advocates were vocal. But there was nothing in it now for Grant except to feel his way. He could not force his troops through the net of creeks and bayous swollen with winter's freshets, but transferring his army to the west bank of the river he encamped at Milliken's Bend and utilized the time till spring in testing schemes to get boats and supplies around the Vicksburg batteries to help the army later operate below; cutting canals to change the river's winding course; breaking levees, uniting lakes, hunting for channels; and all the time attending to the disagreeable details of army management. Dishonest and disloyal traders from the North infested his department, drawn by the lure of cotton speculation, and at last in desperation he ordered the expulsion of "Jews as a class" — a drastic step which raised a storm of protest in Congress and the press

till Lincoln countermanded it — Lincoln, who knew Grant's feeling toward the traders in necessities of war, his old friend Leonard Swett, of Springfield, having once been ordered out of Cairo on pain of being shot because he tried to force on Grant a questionable deal in hay. When Swett sought Lincoln at the White House with his protest, Lincoln said, "Well, Swett, if I were in your place, I should keep out of Ulysses Simpson's bailiwick, for to the best of my knowledge and belief Grant will keep his promise if he catches you in Cairo."

Amid distractions such as these Grant worked out his daring plans for seizing Vicksburg. He was on trial at Washington. Discontent was spreading through the North, discouraged by the months of dreary waiting. It was a dark hour for the Union cause. Stanton, hard pressed on every side, was moved in his impatience to do a foolish thing. He thought to bribe his generals into action and sent a letter to Grant, Rosecrans, and Hooker promising to make the victor of the first important battle a major-general in the regular army. Rosecrans, commanding the Army of the Cumberland in Tennessee, wrote a petulant reply. Hooker promptly led the Army of the Potomac to humiliating defeat at Chancellorsville. Grant ignored the letter; he did not let it hasten him or influence his course.

When all was ready on the night of April 16, 1863, Porter bravely ran the blazing Vicksburg batteries with a portion of his fleet, following with others later, safely performing almost without a scar a feat which Sherman and most of Grant's other generals thought too perilous to undertake. The army, having marched down the western bank by a circuitous route, was camped at Carthage in Louisiana ready to be ferried across the Mississippi, and on the 30th of April it landed on the eastern side at Bruinsburg, south of Vicksburg.

There began the wonderful campaign which ended two months later in Pemberton's capitulation of the rebel stronghold. "When this landing was effected," Grant says, "I felt a degree of relief scarcely ever equaled since. Vicksburg was not yet taken it is true, nor were its defenders demoralized by any of our previous moves. I was now in the enemy's country with a vast river and the stronghold of Vicksburg between me and my base of supplies. But I was on dry ground on the same side of the river with the enemy. All the campaigns, labor, hardships, and exposures from the month of December previous to this time that had been made and endured, were for the accomplishment of this one object."

How in a flash he seized Port Gibson and then, without a word to Halleck, and in the face of Sher-

man's doubts, with only three days' rations, cutting loose from base, struck out for Vicksburg, feeding his army off the country as he rushed them on from fight to fight; how Halleck, too late learning what was on, ordered him back to help Banks at Port Hudson; how he caught Joe Johnston at Jackson, separating Johnston's Army from Pemberton's, and seized the Mississippi capital and railroad center, cutting off Vicksburg from this dépôt of supplies; how in eighteen days he marched two hundred miles, won five pitched battles, took eight thousand prisoners and eighty cannon, scattered a hostile army larger than his own fighting on its chosen ground, and had the rebel army penned in Vicksburg, is a story whose mere recital emblazons the chronicles of war. "This is a campaign," cried Sherman as he rode out with Grant on May 18, and looked down on the bluffs where he had been repulsed so signally five months before. "Until this moment I never thought your movement a success. But this is a success, even if we never take the town."

There came one set-back. On May 22, hearing that Johnston was gathering an army to raise the siege, he ventured an assault, and after a reverse, misled by an appeal for aid from McClernand, who fancied he alone was carrying the forts, ordered a second assault, resulting in a bad repulse. He then renewed

the siege, his army strengthened by recruits to seventy thousand men, and on the morning of July 4, swift on the heels of Gettysburg, he entered Vicksburg, Pemberton surlily surrendering thirty-one thousand men and one hundred and seventy-two pieces of artillery. "Grant . . ." Dana wired to Stanton, "was received by Pemberton with . . . marked impertinence. . . . He bore it like a philosopher."

After all was over Grant handed back to Sherman the letter Sherman wrote advising him against his daring plan. He says the subject was not mentioned subsequently by either till the end of the war, and that "Sherman gave the same energy to make the campaign a success that he would or could have done if it had been ordered by himself."

"The campaign of Vicksburg," Sherman later wrote, "in its conception and execution, belonged exclusively to General Grant, not only in the great whole, but in the thousands of its details. I still retain many of his letters and notes, all in his own handwriting, prescribing the routes of march for divisions and detachments, specifying even the amount of food and tools to be carried along. Many persons gave his adjutant-general, Rawlins, the credit for these things, but they were in error; for no commanding general of any army ever gave more of

his personal attention to details, or wrote so many of his own orders, reports, and letters, as General Grant."[1]

Even if Grant's career had ended then, his fame was safe, for subsequent defeat could not have spoiled the perfect record of his high achievement. No matter what had gone before or what might happen after Vicksburg, he now had confidence in his own destiny. He felt that he would be the one to bring the war to a successful end. Vicksburg had been before his eye ever since Paducah, and it had come at last to him among a great array of Union generals who had at the beginning more prestige, without intrigue for self-advancement on his part, and in the face of personal rebuffs which would have dismayed a man of ordinary mould.

"Every one has his superstitions," he wrote years later, referring to his silence under criticism. "One of mine is that in positions of great responsibility every one should do his duty to the best of his ability when assigned by competent authority, without application or the use of influence to change his position.

"While at Cairo I had watched with very great interest the operations of the Army of the Potomac, looking upon that as the main field of the war. I had no idea myself of ever having any large command,

[1] *Memoirs of W. T. Sherman*, vol. I, p. 362.

nor did I suppose that I was equal to one; but I said I would give anything if I were commanding a brigade of cavalry in the Army of the Potomac and believed that I could do some good. Captain Hillyer suggested that I make application to be transferred there to command the cavalry. I then told him that I would cut my right arm off first."

He had now conquered Halleck's prejudice as he had justified the trust of Lincoln. "In boldness of plan, rapidity of execution, and brilliancy of results," wrote Halleck handsomely, "these operations will compare most favorably with those of Napoleon about Ulm." Sherman wrote years later that the campaign would rank with the best of the young Napoleon in Italy in 1796, and that the "position at Vicksburg was more difficult than that at Sebastopol," which he had seen.

"I would not have risked the passing of the batteries at Vicksburg and trusting to the long route by Grand Gulf and Jackson to reach what we both knew were the key-points to Vicksburg," Sherman acknowledged when the siege was over. "But I would have aimed to reach the same points from Grenada. But both aimed at the same points, and though both of us knew little of the actual ground, it is wonderful how well they have realized our military calculations. As we sat at Oxford last November we saw in the

future what we now realize, and like the architect who sees developed the beautiful vision of his brain, we feel an intense satisfaction at the realization of our military plans. I thank God no President was near to thwart our plans and that the short-sighted public could not drive us from our object till the plan was fully realized."

Yet Sherman always thought that if Grant had kept on from Oxford after the capture of his supplies at Holly Springs, he would have saved the six months used in reaching Bruinsburg and have achieved the same result. Grant might have done this had his troops then had the seasoning he gave them later.

The chapter cannot properly be closed save with the letter Lincoln wrote to Grant at Vicksburg within a week after it had fallen: —

"I do not remember that you and I ever met personally. I write this now as a grateful acknowledgment for the almost inestimable service you have done the country. I wish to say a word further. When you first reached the vicinity of Vicksburg, I thought you should do what you finally did — march the troops across the neck, run the batteries with the transports, and thus go below; and I never had any faith, except a general hope that you knew better than I, that the Yazoo Pass expedition and the like could succeed. When you got below and took Port Gibson, Grand

Gulf, and vicinity, I thought you should go down the river and join General Banks, and when you turned northward, east of the Big Black, I feared it was a mistake. I now wish to make the personal acknowledgment that you were right and I was wrong."

Lincoln at once named Grant a major-general in the regular army. He had not needed Stanton's bribe.

CHAPTER XVI

RAWLINS AND DANA

"THE simple fact is that the great character which has passed into history under the name of Grant was compounded of both Grant and Rawlins in nearly equal parts. While one has become a national hero whose fame will never die, the other unnecessarily effaced himself and is now scarcely known beyond the acquaintance of his surviving comrades or the limits of the community from which both took up arms for the cause of the Union." Thus a distinguished soldier, who was on Grant's staff and intimate with both men, has written.[1] It has even been asserted that Rawlins spoke with Grant's lips and looked out of Grant's eyes so closely did they intertwine. Hyperbole like this will not be credited by those who read the record, yet it is no great stretch to say that Rawlins was Grant's conscience, though he did not compare with him in the peculiar qualities which were responsible for Grant's success.

It was Grant's great good fortune that, in the casual thought he gave his staff when he became a brigadier, he should have hit on Rawlins, a crude, young lawyer who had worked his way up from the

[1] General James H. Wilson, *Life of Charles A. Dana*, p. 241.

charcoal pit, whom Grant had hardly seen until the first war meeting in Galena, and who had caught his fancy there in an impassioned plea for volunteers. With one or two exceptions the early members of his staff, chosen for old times' sake or to please his family, were found to be incumbrances and were perforce discarded as he shouldered heavier burdens, to be replaced by men like Wilson, Porter, Comstock, Badeau, Leet, and Babcock, each of whom had some peculiar merit. Rawlins and Bowers were with him till they died. But indispensable as Rawlins came to be, there is no evidence that he contributed to Grant's supreme achievement except by giving him unselfishly the service of an unfailing adjutant and devoted friend. He had scant learning and no military training but what he gained in camp with Grant. He was robustly honest, grim of face and crudely mannered, outspoken and explosive with profanity, at heart a Puritan. He protected Grant in countless ways from those who would impose on his simplicity, made others show Grant deference which Grant would not exact himself, and watched him constantly to save him from mistakes. Perhaps his greatest service was in keeping him from drink, for he appreciated more than Grant the handle envious rivals made of any lapse, and that while Grant might drink no more than others, he could not afford to

drink as much, by very reason of the stories which were widely spread and of the damage they might do the Union cause. Of course there is no question of Grant's habit, and that at times he favored it too much, but envious tongues gave it far greater emphasis than it deserved. If Grant had not been as successful as he was, his habits would have cut no figure. Who cares if other Union generals abstained or not? Yet those who did were in a small minority. With some it is about their only claim to fame. Lincoln, responding about this time to an appeal from Sons of Temperance, quizzically remarked that "in a hard struggle I do not know but what it is some consolation to be aware that there is some intemperance on the other side too."

Charles A. Dana, who had been sent by Stanton to spy out the Western armies and learn the truth of the conflicting tales about their generals, Grant in particular, and give him independent information, wrote him of Rawlins after Vicksburg: "Lieutenant-Colonel Rawlins never loses a moment and never gives himself any indulgence except swearing and scolding. . . . A townsman of Grant's, and has a great influence over him, especially because he watches him day and night, and whenever he commits the folly of tasting liquor hastens to remind him that at the beginning of the war he gave him

(Rawlins) his word of honor not to touch a drop as long as it lasted. Grant thinks Rawlins a first-rate adjutant, but I think this is a mistake. He is too slow, and can't write the English language correctly without a great deal of careful consideration. Indeed illiterateness is a general characteristic of Grant's staff and in fact of Grant's generals and regimental officers of all ranks."

Over thirty years later, with the full history of the war in retrospect, he gave his judgment that Rawlins was one of the most valuable men in the army. "He had a very able mind, clear, strong, and not subject to hysterics. He bossed everything at Grant's headquarters. He had very little respect for persons, and a rough style of conversation. I have heard him curse at Grant, when, according to his judgment, the general was doing something that he thought he had better not do. But he was entirely devoted to his duty, with the clearest judgment, and perfectly fearless. Without him Grant would not have been the same man. Rawlins was essentially a good man, though he was one of the most profane men I ever knew; there was no guile in him — he was as upright and as genuine a character as I ever came across."[1]

Dana himself, though a civilian, was a factor in the fixing of Grant's reputation. Stanton and Lincoln

[1] *Recollections of the Civil War*, p. 62.

owed to him their knowledge of the Vicksburg venture as the campaign progressed, for Grant was chary of his correspondence, sent only brief dispatches, neglected expositions of his plans, moved silently and swiftly to his ends, ignoring the malicious work of slanderous tongues. It needed Dana's quick intelligence, keen eye, and vivid pen to dissipate the fogs which clouded Washington. It was due in large degree to his reports that Lincoln clung to Grant while, pending Vicksburg, politicians pressed him to make a change, demanding Grant's removal almost up to the very day the town capitulated. "I rather like the man," said Lincoln; "I think we will try him a little longer."

It was Dana who set Stanton right about McClernand, and kept him straight; told him the manner of man he had in Grant, described the obstacles which must be overcome, and gave him thumb-nail sketches of the generals in the West.

Grant trusted Dana, who lived at headquarters throughout the siege of Vicksburg, to keep Stanton posted, and turned his own attention to more pressing things. Dana, with Rawlins and Wilson of the staff, were with Grant constantly, and in his confidence, so far as that was true of any one, for Grant, who never held a council of war, harbored his thoughts and husbanded his intimacies: "I heard what men

had to say — the stream of talk at headquarters — but I made up my own mind and from my written orders my staff got their first knowledge of what was to be done. No living man knew of plans until they were matured and decided."[1] "Grant was an uncommon fellow," Dana writes; "the most modest, the most disinterested, and the most honest man I ever knew, with a temper that nothing could disturb, and a judgment that was judicial in its comprehensiveness and wisdom. Not a great man, except morally; not an original or brilliant man; but sincere, thoughtful, deep, and gifted with courage that never faltered; when the time came to risk all, he went in like a simple-hearted, unaffected, unpretending hero, whom no ill omens could deject, and no triumph unduly exalt. A social, friendly man, too, fond of a pleasant joke and also ready with one; but liking above all a long chat of an evening, and ready to sit up with you all night talking in the cold breeze in front of his tent. Not a man of sentimentality, not demonstrative in friendship, but always holding to his friends, and just even to the enemies he hated."[2]

Dana after Vicksburg suggested Grant as the commander of the Armies of the West.

[1] Young, vol. II, p. 306.

[2] *Recollections of the Civil War*, p. 61.

CHAPTER XVII

CHATTANOOGA AND MISSIONARY RIDGE

GRANT would have lost no time in clearing up the Mississippi problem if Washington had given him his head. He could have captured Mobile easily with his exultant army, and operating from that base, have thrown troops against Bragg's rear, diverting him from southern Tennessee where he confronted Rosecrans. But Washington had other plans, and again, as after Corinth, dispersed Grant's army, sending troops to Schofield in Missouri, to Banks in Louisiana, and to Burnside in East Tennessee. Lincoln would have invaded Texas to threaten Maximilian in Mexico, and he was set upon relieving the loyal mountaineers of East Tennessee. The scattering of Grant's army and his forced idleness gave Joe Johnston an opportunity to recruit his forces and to gather up the men whom Grant, with a mistaken generosity, had let march out of Vicksburg on parole, thus strengthening the army which, on the 19th and 20th of September, came near crushing Rosecrans at Chickamauga Creek, compelling his retreat to Chattanooga with McCook and Crittenden, while Thomas with his corps stood alone unshakable for hours against great odds, thus saving a complete

catastrophe and gaining for himself the name he carried ever after — "the Rock of Chickamauga."

The Army of the Cumberland might have been spared this blow had its commander, obedient to Grant's suggestion and Halleck's order, moved against Bragg while Vicksburg was in siege and Johnston occupied in trying to aid Pemberton, but Rosecrans objected then because he said it was a military maxim "not to fight two decisive battles at the same time." If true, Grant thought this maxim was not applicable: "It would be bad to be defeated in two decisive battles fought the same day, but it would not be bad to win them" — a flash which throws light on the difference between the two. Rosecrans was a trained and scholarly commander, ingratiating, vacillating, fearful to give offense, loved by his men, grieving incessantly that his hazy aims were balked by those above him. Grant thought him insincere and Jesuitical, while he thought Grant a fool for luck.

During this time there was much talk about Grant's coming East to take command, as other Western generals had been brought East before. McClellan, Pope, Burnside, and Hooker had been found wanting one by one; and now Meade, victorious at Gettysburg, had lost the confidence of Lincoln by letting Lee cross the Potomac without another fight. But

Grant discouraged these suggestions. "They have there able officers who have been brought up with that army and to import a commander to place over them certainly could produce no good. While I would not positively disobey an order, I would have objected most vehemently to taking that command or any other except the one I have — I can do more with this army than it would be possible for me to do with any other, without time to make the same acquaintance with others that I have with this. . . . I believe I know the exact capacity of every general in my command."

But a far greater opportunity was at hand. In the rout at Chickamauga, before he knew that Thomas had stood firm, Dana, watching the day for Stanton, had wired him, "My dispatch to-day is of deplorable importance; Chickamauga is as fatal a name in our history as Bull Run." There was dismay in Washington, which was not relieved by later tidings of the plight in which defeat and indecision had left the Army of the Cumberland — Rosecrans was cooped up in Chattanooga strongly intrenched, but cut off from supplies by Bragg, whose eager army held the hills above the town. He might hold out till reinforced by Sherman and Hooker, who were on the way, but food and fuel were getting scarce, his horses starving, and winter coming on. His idle

army was demoralized and he seemed dazed. In spite of the respect his men had for him, he must be relieved of his command in order to escape a worse catastrophe.

Stanton would have supplanted him with Thomas, but Thomas, who six months before stood loyally by Buell when offered Buell's place, now stood as loyally by Buell's successor. He said he would not take that command, though he would welcome any other. He would do nothing to countenance suspicion of intrigue against his commander's interest.

Then Stanton, acting quickly, created a brand-new division comprising everything between the Alleghanies and the Mississippi except Banks at New Orleans; chose Grant for command, ordered Grant to Louisville, hurried West himself, and on the train to Louisville told Grant, whom he had never seen before, the plan he had in mind. Word came to Louisville from Dana that Rosecrans was thinking of retreat — a disastrous thing which would have left the rebels in complete control of one of the three great strongholds of the war, whereupon Grant, responding instantly to Stanton's frantic urging, assumed immediate command of the Divison of the Mississippi, and simultaneously wired Thomas assigning him to head the Army of the Cumberland and telling him he must "hold Chattanooga at all

hazards." Thomas replied by telegraph, "We will hold the town till we starve."

That night Grant went to the theater, to the great distress of Rawlins, who looked upon it as a time for penitence and prayer. At daybreak he was on his way by rail and swollen roads to Chattanooga, where he arrived October 23, "wet, dirty, and well," as Dana wired to Stanton, but still on crutches and suffering agony with his crushed leg.

Those present at Grant's meeting with Thomas at headquarters, soon after his arrival, agree that Thomas treated him with curious lack of courtesy, forgetful that he was his guest as well as his commanding general. Just why has never been explained, but it is certain that throughout the war there was reserve between the two; for neither ever learned truly to comprehend the other, and with Thomas there was a marked absence of the cordial feeling which was so strikingly in evidence with Sheridan and Sherman. While no one ever saw in Thomas a trace of envious rivalry with Grant, his coolness was transmuted into hot controversy by his partisans in the great Army of the Cumberland.

A swift change came with Grant's arrival. That night, says Horace Porter, who saw him then for the first time, after sitting absolutely silent for a while listening attentively to what the others said and fol-

lowing on the map the disposition of the troops, he straightened in his chair and began firing questions at his new subordinates, pertinent, incisive, comprehensive, showing that he had in mind not only the prompt lifting of the embargo on supplies, — "opening up the cracker line," he called it, — but a speedy move against the enemy. He was as always eager to push on. Then turning to a table he wrote dispatches for an hour — the first to Halleck: "Have just arrived; I will write to-morrow. Please approve order placing Sherman in command of Department of the Tennessee, with headquarters in the field." The next day, with Thomas and "Baldy" Smith, he viewed the Union lines, and ordered Smith to set at once upon the work of opening communication with supplies.

That night again he wrote dispatches with his own hand, as was his way. "His work was performed swiftly and uninterruptedly, but without any marked display of nervous energy," writes Porter. "His thoughts flowed as freely from his mind as the ink from his pen; he was never at a loss for an expression, and seldom interlined a word or made a material correction. He sat with his head bent low over the table, and when he had occasion . . . he would glide rapidly across the room without straightening himself and return to his seat with his body still bent over at

about the same angle at which he had been sitting. . . . Looking over the dispatches I found that he was ordering up Sherman's entire force from Corinth to within supporting distance, and was informing Halleck of the dispositions decided upon for the opening of a line of supplies and assuring him that everything possible would be done for the relief of Burnside in East Tennessee . . . the taking of vigorous and comprehensive steps in every direction throughout his new and extensive command. . . . I cannot dwell too forcibly on the deep impression made . . . by the exhibition . . . of his singular mental powers and his rare military qualities. . . . Hardly any one was prepared to find one who had the grasp, the promptness of decision, and the general administrative capacity which he displayed at the very start as commander of an extensive military division in which many complicated problems were presented for immediate solution."[1]

When Grant appeared in Chattanooga the town was in almost as desperate a case as Vicksburg just before its fall. Bragg, with superior forces encamped on Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge only three miles away, could calmly contemplate the starving enemy below. Burnside, with twenty-five thousand men in siege at Knoxville one hundred miles

[1] *Campaigning with Grant*, p. 7.

to the northeast, was also in sore straits and calling vainly for relief. Within five days, as the result of swift and daring moves by "Baldy" Smith and others which Grant hastened, the "cracker line" was open; there was no further danger of starvation, surrender, or retreat, and Grant and Thomas were in position to hold the town all winter or till reinforcements should arrive. Shortly Sherman was there from Mississippi and Hooker from the East.

And now there broke for Grant the most resplendent day of his career. He had no thought of holding Chattanooga with hostile guns surveying him complacently from neighboring heights. He would wait only till the forces he had summoned should arrive. Then he would leap out at the enemy. As early as October 28 he wired to Halleck: "The question of supplies may now be regarded as settled. If the rebels give us one week more I think all danger of losing territory now held by us will have passed away, and preparations may commence for offensive operations." Sherman, having led his army three hundred miles through a rough, hostile country, rode into Chattanooga on November 15, and one week later, on November 23, Grant began the three days' fight of Chattanooga, the most completely planned of all his battles, a feat unmarred in its perfection and as a spectacle unequaled in the history of war.

The secrecy and skill of the preliminary strategy, the military panorama, with its sublime scenic setting unrolled before the eyes of Grant and Thomas, posted on Orchard Knob, watching their armies in glittering pageant march to undimmed success, the glimpse of Hooker and his men fighting "above the clouds" on Lookout Mountain, the marvelous charge of Sheridan and Wood with nearly twenty thousand bayonets up to the very top of Missionary Ridge, mowing the enemy like wheat, the panic-stricken flight of Bragg's astonished troops, the frantic joy and tumult of the victorious Union army as Grant rode down the lines, blend in a battle picture with no parallel.

The three days' engagement is known as "Chattanooga," the third day's fight as "Missionary Ridge," in memory of the culminating glory of a deed which has been called "one of the greatest miracles in military history." Dana, who stood with Grant and Thomas witnessing the charge, wrote the next day: "No man who climbs the ascent by any of the roads that wind above its front can believe that eighteen thousand men were moved up its broken and crumbling base unless it was his fortune to witness the deed; it seems as awful as a visible interposition of God. Neither Grant nor Thomas intended it. Their orders were to carry the rifle-pits along the

base of the ridge and capture their occupants; but when this was accomplished, the unaccountable spirit of the troops bore them bodily up those implacable steeps, over the bristling rifle-pits on the crest and the thirty cannon enfilading every gully. The order to storm appears to have been given simultaneously by Generals Sheridan and Wood, because the men were not to be held back."

It was the only battle of the war in which its four great figures, Grant, Thomas, Sherman, and Sheridan, were engaged together. Knoxville was saved at Chattanooga as Corinth was fought at Shiloh, Burnside was liberated from his pen, and East Tennessee was cleared. On December 8 Lincoln sent Grant this telegram: "Understanding that your lodgment at Chattanooga and Knoxville is now secure, I wish to tender you, and all under your command, my more than thanks, my profoundest gratitude, for the skill, courage, and perseverance with which you and they, over so great difficulties, have effected that important object. God bless you all!"

Grant, starting with Paducah, had moved resistlessly, slowly at first, but gathering momentum as he advanced, pressing the rebel forces steadily toward Richmond. A sense of the inevitable was beginning to pervade the North, and to be felt abroad. "Thank Heaven! the 'coming man,' for whom we have

so long been waiting, seems really to have come," wrote Motley from Vienna. ". . . Ulysses Grant is *at least* equal to any general now living in any part of the world, and by far the first that our war has produced on either side."[1] A German writer spoke of Chattanooga as "an action which both for scientific combination and bravery of execution is equal to any battle of modern times from the days of Frederick the Great downwards."

It happened that the country heard of Missionary Ridge on the last Thursday in November — Thanksgiving Day — just as it heard of Vicksburg on July 4. It was the week after the Address at Gettysburg. Within a fortnight a bill was introduced in Congress reviving the grade of Lieutenant-General, a title which Washington had borne. Before the winter ended, the bill had passed by great majorities and Lincoln had given Grant the rank — making him General-in-Chief of all the armies of the United States.

[1] *The Correspondence of John Lothrop Motley*, vol. II, p. 146.

CHAPTER XVIII

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL

It was Washburne, his earliest influential friend, and at times almost his sole defender, who first proposed that Grant be made Lieutenant-General, hardly waiting for Congress to assemble before he introduced the bill. When Grant learned what was doing he wrote at once from Chattanooga: —

"I feel under many obligations to you for the interest you have taken in my welfare. But recollect that I have been highly honored already by the Government, and do not ask or feel that I deserve anything more in the shape of honors or promotions. A success over the enemy is what I crave above everything else, and desire to hold such an influence over those under my command as to enable me to use them to the best advantage to secure this end." [1]

Lincoln was worried, lest at last "the man on horseback" might have come, who with an army at his call would seize the reins of power; for at that time Grant was the people's hero while Lincoln was in rather poor repute by reason of the scanty harvest of his other generals, and an election was at hand momentous in its possibilities. But Lincoln was not

[1] *Letters to a Friend*, p. 32.

kept long in suspense. "I am not a candidate for any office," Grant wrote his father. "All I want is to be left alone to fight this war out." To a friend who wrote him that he had it in his power to be the next President he replied: "This is the last thing in the world I desire. I would regard such a consummation as highly unfortunate for myself if not for the country. Through Providence I have attained to more than I ever hoped, and, with the position I now hold in the regular army, if allowed to retain it, will be more than satisfied."[1] When he went to St. Louis from Nashville, where he made his headquarters that winter, he stayed with his old humble friends, Mr. and Mrs. Boggs, and took them in a street-car to the theater.

Lincoln, who longed for reëlection, not only on his own account, but because he felt that any change just then would mean disaster to the Union cause, heard these things gladly. They dissipated his unrest.

Grant would have followed Missionary Ridge by throwing his army from Chattanooga to Mobile, thus clearing Georgia of the rebel troops, cutting the South again as he had cut it at the Mississippi, seizing a port through which supplies reached the Confederacy, and tightening the pressure upon Lee. But Washington did not approve, and consequently he

[1] Richardson, *Personal History*, p. 374.

remained at Nashville through the winter getting his army ready for a spring campaign, just where he did not know until after he was named Lieutenant-General and went to Washington for his commission. It was then that he determined to take command in person of the armies in Virginia and dispose his other armies so as best to conquer Lee. But before he left for Washington he did a gracious and great-hearted thing. He wrote to Sherman a letter which will live as long as he and Sherman are remembered: —

"Whilst I have been eminently successful in this war, in at least gaining the confidence of the public, no one feels more than I how much of this success is due to the energy, skill, and the harmonious putting forth of that energy and skill, of those whom it has been my good fortune to have occupying subordinate positions under me. There are many officers to whom these remarks are applicable to a greater or less degree, proportionate to their ability as soldiers; but what I want is to express my thanks to you and McPherson as the men to whom, above all others, I feel indebted for whatever I have had of success. How far your advice and assistance have been of help to me, you know; how far your execution of whatever has been given to you to do entitles you to the reward I am receiving, you can not know as well as I."

Nor will men forget Sherman's fine reply: —

"You do McPherson and myself too much honor. At Belmont you manifested your traits, neither of us being near. At Donelson, also, you illustrated your whole character. I was not near, and McPherson in too subordinate a capacity to influence you. . . . I believe you are as brave, patriotic, and just as the great prototype, Washington; as unselfish, kind-hearted, and honest as a man should be; but the chief characteristic is the simple faith in success you have always manifested, which I can liken to nothing else than the faith the Christian has in the Saviour. This faith gave you victory at Shiloh and Vicksburg. Also, when you have completed your best preparations, you go into battle without hesitation, as at Chattanooga, — no doubts, no reserve, — and I tell you, it was this that made us act with confidence. I knew wherever I was, that you thought of me; and if I got in a tight place you would come — if alive. My only points of doubt were in your knowledge of grand strategy, and of books of science and history; but I confess your common sense seems to have supplied all these."

"Don't stay in Washington," cried Sherman. "Come West; take to yourself the whole Mississippi Valley. Let us make it dead sure. . . . Here lies the seat of coming empire; and from the West, when our task is done, we will make short work of Charleston

and Richmond, and the impoverished coast of the Atlantic."

But Sherman could not have his way. Grant would have stayed with his old army which he had organized and knew; but he was quick to see in Washington that he must take himself the task of facing Lee, with self-taught strategists near by ready to trip his feet in their entangling schemes.

His coming to the Capital, which he had never seen, was commonplace — almost too typical of his plain habit — unostentatious and unknown. Waiting his turn to register at the hotel, the clerk, who sized him up for what he seemed, assigned him to a top-floor room and gasped with incredulity when he saw him write, "U. S. Grant and son — Galena, Illinois." He went with Cameron to the White House unannounced, found Lincoln holding a reception and would have run away if Seward had not taken him in tow. When he was handed his commission the next day by Lincoln and read the few words he had written in response to Lincoln's little speech, he was hardly audible and fumbled with his paper like a boy, but it was noticed that he had not taken Lincoln's diplomatic hint to mollify the feelings of the Eastern troops by saying something to ingratiate himself with the new armies placed in his command.

Pictures have come down to us of his appearance at this time which have peculiar interest in the glimpse they give of his impress upon contemporaries of quite different types. Richard Henry Dana, a Boston scholar of the Brahmin class, happened upon him in the Willard lobby, and thus wrote: "A short, round-shouldered man, in a very tarnished major-general's uniform came up. . . . He had no gait, no station, no manner, rough, light-brown whiskers, a blue eye, and rather a scrubby look withal. A crowd formed around him; men looked, stared at him, as if they were taking his likeness, and two generals were introduced. Still, I could not get his name. It was not Hooker. Who could it be? . . . I inquired of the bookkeeper. 'That is General Grant.' I joined the starers. I saw that the ordinary, scrubby-looking man, with a slightly seedy look, as if he was out of office and on half-pay and nothing to do but hang around the entry of Willard's, cigar in mouth, had a clear blue eye, and a look of resolution, as if he could not be trifled with, and an entire indifference to the crowd about him. Straight nose, too. Still, to see him talking and smoking in the lower entry of Willard's, in that crowd, in such times, — the generalissimo of our armies, on whom the destiny of the empire seemed to hang! . . . He gets over the ground queerly. He does not march, nor quite walk, but

pitches along as if the next step would bring him on his nose. But his face looks firm and hard, and his eye is clear and resolute, and he is certainly natural, and clear of all appearance of self-consciousness."[1]

Beside this we can set the portraiture of Horace Porter and Adam Badeau, who had lately joined Grant's staff: Porter describes him as slightly stooped, five feet, eight inches in height, weighing only a hundred and thirty-five pounds, modest and gentle in his manner; face not perfectly symmetrical, the left eye a little lower than the right; his brow, high, broad, and rather square creased with horizontal wrinkles which helped to emphasize the somewhat careworn look, though not an index to his nature which was always buoyant. "His voice was exceedingly musical and one of the clearest in sound and most distinct in utterance that I have ever heard. It had a singular power of penetration, and sentences spoken by him in an ordinary tone in camp could be heard at a distance which was surprising." His gait in walking was decidedly unmilitary; he never carried his body erect; never kept step to the airs played by the bands; was often slow in his movements, "but when roused to activity quick in every motion and worked with marvelous rapidity."[2]

Badeau tells of his clear but not penetrating eye, his

[1] Rhodes, vol. IV, p. 438. [2] *Campaigning with Grant*, p. 13

heavy jaw, his sharply cut mouth, "which had a singular power of expressing sweetness and strength combined, and which at times became set with a rigidity like that of fate itself." The habitual expression of his face was so quiet as to be almost incomprehensible; his manner plain, placid, almost meek; "in great moments disclosed to those who knew him well immense but still suppressed intensity." In utterance he was slow and sometimes embarrassed, but the well-chosen words never left the slightest doubt of what he meant to say. "The whole man was a marvel of simplicity, a powerful nature, veiled in the plainest possible exterior. He discussed the most ordinary themes with apparent interest, and turned from them in the same quiet tones, and without a shade of difference in his manner, to decisions that involved the fate of armies, his own fame or the life of the republic. . . ." But unexpectedly and in the most casual way he would utter the clearest ideas in the tersest form; "announcing judgments made apparently at the moment, which he never reversed — enunciating opinions or declaring plans of the most important character in the plainest words and commonest manner, as if great things and small were to him of equal moment, or as if it cost him no more to command armies than to direct a farm, to capture cities than to drive a horse. In battle, how-

ever, the sphinx awoke . . . the utterance was prompt, the ideas were rapid, the judgment was decisive, the words were those of command. The whole man became intense as it were with a white heat."[1]

Here we catch a composite portrait of the new chief of the Union forces in command of more than half a million men, who, setting out upon the campaign which he meant should crush the rebel armies and bring an end to war, bore with him to the front these parting words from Lincoln: —

"I wish to express in this way my entire satisfaction with what you have done up to this time, so far as I understand it. The particulars of your plans I neither know nor seek to know. You are vigilant and self-reliant; and, pleased with this, I wish not to obtrude any constraints or restraints upon you. While I am very anxious that any great disaster or capture of our men in great numbers shall be avoided, I know these points are less likely to escape your attention than they would be mine. If there is anything wanting which is within my power to give, do not fail to let me know. And now, with a brave army and a just cause, may God sustain you."

"It shall be my earnest endeavor that you and the country shall not be disappointed," was Grant's reply. ". . . Should my success be less than I desire

[1] *Military History of Ulysses S. Grant*, vol. II, p. 20.

or expect, the least I can say is, the fault is not with you."

Lincoln had already told Grant in their first interview that all he wanted or had ever wanted was "one who would take the responsibility and act, and call on him for all the assistance needed"; and Grant had said that he would do the best he could with what he had at hand and would not annoy him or the War Department more than could be helped.

It was like Grant that through the war he did not once complain to Lincoln or appeal to Washington, even when Halleck hazed him after Donelson and Shiloh; and Lincoln, who wrote often quaintly to his other generals, regarded with complacency one whom he could let alone. McClellan, Buell, Hooker had notes of admonition in which reproof was deftly clothed in homely phrase; but Grant had none. Lincoln told Buell he did not understand "why we cannot march as the enemy marches, live as he lives, and fight as he fights, unless we admit the inferiority of our troops and of our generals."[1] He tarnished Hooker's joy in being placed at the head of the Army of the Potomac with a memorable letter chiding him for thwarting Burnside and telling him he thought it best "for you to know there are some things in regard to which I am not quite satisfied with you."[2]

[1] Lincoln's *Complete Works*, vol. II, p. 248. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 306.

When McClellan wired that his horses were sore-tongued and fatigued, Lincoln wired back, "Will you pardon me for asking what the horses of your army have done since Antietam that fatigues anything?"[1]

These are mild samples of rebukes which Lincoln penned. One cannot see him writing thus to Grant.

[1] Lincoln's *Complete Works*, vol. II, p. 250.

CHAPTER XIX

THE CLINCH WITH LEE

REBELLION was in flower when Grant was put in chief command. In spite of his successes in the West and those gained by the gallant little navy, ten Southern States were in revolt — nine million people inhabiting eight hundred thousand miles — an empire in extent and population, rich in resources and the world's respect. Europe still looked to see the South prevail; the South still thought itself impregnable. After three years of war she seemed no nearer conquest than at first except to those who saw in true perspective just what had been done west of the Alleghanies and along the coast.

The Northern forces held the Mississippi strongly garrisoned from St. Louis to its mouth. The territory west of this below the Arkansas was still in rebel hands except New Orleans, a few other points in southern Louisiana, and a small post in Texas near the mouth of the Rio Grande. The Western armies having cleared the border States of Tennessee, Kentucky, and Missouri, except for irresponsible guerrilla bands, held all the railroad lines from Memphis as far east as Chattanooga and then the Tennessee and Holsten Rivers to the Alleghanies. Western

Virginia had been transformed into a loyal State. The Northern forces occupied a narrow segment of eastern Virginia, fringing its northern border to the Rapidan. With garrisons at Norfolk and at Fort Monroe, they held the entrance to the James; and there were federal footholds at other points along the coast. The motley wooden navy had maintained a fairly good blockade — good enough to throttle cotton exports from the South and starve the mills and laborers of Lancashire.

The South, though worn by war, was full of spunk. Her people, trusting to their press, looked upon Grant's achievements in the West as, at the worst, sporadic Northern victories; while in the East, which to their thinking was the real seat of the war, they could see nothing but unmarred success. They had Manassas, Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville to brag about, — unquestioned triumphs, — while in their eyes Gettysburg and Antietam were merely incidental to protecting Richmond and preventing the invasion of the South; Gettysburg was a rebuff, not a significant defeat; Antietam (Sharpsburg, as they termed it) was a draw; because Meade and McClellan were content to let the Army of the Potomac rest upon its victories, without annihilating Lee or chasing him back home, the South called both engagements indecisive; it still thought Lee invincible.

Against this unity of spirit in the South were set a Northern public honeycombed with rebel sympathy, a commerce cankered with disloyalty, a party organized against the conduct of the government and Lincoln's handling of the war, a propaganda of distrust spread by disgruntled politicians and censorious writers disclosing ugly phases of an irresponsible press-fed democracy. Grant had no holiday in sight when he came East.

He at once put Sherman at the head of the Division of the Mississippi, and on the 17th of March announced that his own headquarters would be in the field and for the present with the Army of the Potomac, then under Meade's command. Meade nobly offered to give up the place which he had held since Gettysburg, nine months before, thinking that Grant might want a friend like Sherman near at hand, and said that for himself wherever ordered he would do his best, that in the work before them the feeling or wishes of no one person should interfere with picking the right men. Grant did not demand the sacrifice. "This incident," he says, "gave me even a more favorable opinion of Meade than did his great victory at Gettysburg the July before. It is men who wait to be selected, and not those who seek, from whom we may always expect the most efficient service."

So Meade stayed where he was; but it was not a

happy case no matter how hard each might try to have it so. Meade, who for months had held an independent and responsible command, looking ahead to crown the work begun at Gettysburg by crushing Lee, was now thrown into the shade of one he scarcely knew and in such close proximity that, however tactfully the thing was handled, nothing could hide from his subordinates the ever-present fact that he was a subordinate himself. As for Grant, he found himself in daily contact with a proud army to which he was a stranger, whose officers and men through years of trial in camp and field were grown attached to their own generals. Grant's orders couched in general terms, trickling through Meade, must lose significance, and sometimes, acting of necessity in haste, he had to issue them direct, greatly to Meade's chagrin. Except that both were single-minded, there were few points of likeness between these two. "Sedgwick and Meade," said Grant, "were men so finely formed that if ordered to resign their generals' commissions and take service as corporals, they would have fallen into the ranks without a murmur." So, too, would Grant, and so would Thomas, but it is hard to think of many more; Sherman would have fallen in, but with profanity. Meade was of delicate grain and sensitive, high-spirited, confiding disappointments only to his wife. "You may look now

for the Army of the Potomac putting laurels on the brow of another," he writes her; and at the end, when Sheridan, not he, was made Lieutenant-General by Grant, "we must find consolation in the consciousness . . . that it is the cruelest and meanest act of injustice."[1] But from the public Meade, while in service, hid his hurt, and Grant has testified that Meade would take another's plan, even when he did not approve it, and carry it out as zealously as if it were his own. Yet Meade shrank from the responsibility of supreme command; in full authority he would hesitate. After Gettysburg, when Lincoln wrote that if Meade would attack Lee "on a field no more than equal for us, the honor will be his if he succeeds and the blame may be mine if he fails," Meade replied as it is unthinkable that Grant would have responded in like case: "It has been my intention to attack the enemy, if I can find him on a field no more than equal for us, and I have only delayed doing so from the difficulty of ascertaining his exact position, and the fear that in endeavoring to do so my communications might be jeopardized."[2]

And Meade had other traits which throw needed light upon the history of the last year of war. His violent temper stirred the dislike of his subordinates

[1] *Life and Letters of George Gordon Meade*, vol. II, p. 300.
[2] *Union Portraits*, p. 76.

and in a measure their distrust. Dana writes that no man, no matter what his business or his service, approached him without insult, in one way or another, and his own staff officers did not dare speak to him unless first spoken to. In action on the field and under nervous strain, especially when things went wrong, he was irascible up to the very edge of madness.

It has been said that for the North the war began with Gettysburg and Vicksburg. Till then the time had been spent in training generals and armies and picking the right man to lead. Campaigns had been haphazard, a summer's fighting and a winter's rest, a victory or defeat and then withdrawal to recuperate. There had been no comprehensive military plan, no fixed and certain aim. Grant said the Army of the Potomac had never been fought through to a finish, and with the constant meddling from Washington, induced sometimes by politics, he might have said the same of other armies, even of his own except near Vicksburg and at Chattanooga; but he steadily had this in mind: that there could be no stable peace until the military power of the rebellion was entirely broken. In his report of the last year's operations he presents the military problem which he faced when he assumed command: —

"From an early period in the rebellion," he says

"I had been impressed with the idea that active and continuous operations of all the troops that could be brought into the field, regardless of season and weather, were necessary to a speedy termination of the war. The resources of the enemy, and his numerical strength, were far inferior to ours; but, as an offset to this, we had a vast territory, with a population hostile to the Government, to garrison, and long lines of river and railroad communications to protect, to enable us to supply the operating armies.

"The armies in the East and West acted independently, and without concert, like a balky team, — no two ever pulling together, — enabling the enemy to use to great advantage his interior lines of communication for transporting troops from East to West, reinforcing the army most vigorously pressed, and to furlough large numbers, during seasons of inactivity on our part, to go to their homes and do the work of providing for the support of their armies. It was a question whether our numerical strength and resources were not more than balanced by these disadvantages and the enemy's superior position."

He determined, "first, to use the greatest number of troops practicable against the armed force of the enemy, preventing him from using the same force at different seasons against first one and then another of our armies, and the possibility of repose for refitting

and producing necessary supplies for carrying on resistance; second, to hammer continuously against the armed force of the enemy and his resources, until, by mere attrition, if in no other way, there should be nothing left to him but an equal submission with the loyal sections of our common country to the Constitution and laws of the land."

The task Grant set himself was to destroy Lee's army. That done rebellion must disintegrate. With Lee eliminated the Confederacy would crumble of itself; there could be no formidable fighting elsewhere — only guerrilla raids. To capture Richmond was important because it was Lee's base. To occupy the Southern Capital had sentimental value, but in Grant's plan it was subordinate — not the main purpose of his strategy. "On to Richmond!" had been the Northern cry till Grant's arrival. After he came the aim was to get Lee. "Lee's army will be your objective point," he ordered Meade. "Wherever Lee goes, you will go also." When once Lee should capitulate, Richmond must also fall. With Lee at large his tent was the real heart of the Confederacy.

Butler at Fort Monroe commanded, with the Army of the James, Richmond's main artery from the sea. Grant gave him a spectacular detail — to seize the Southern Capital and cut off Lee's supplies. Opposed

to him was Beauregard. A small force of 12,000 men were strung along the banks of the Potomac protecting Washington, guarding against a possible invasion of the North. Sigel was in command; opposed to him was Breckinridge. Sherman in command of Grant's old armies, with Thomas, Schofield, Hooker, Howard, and Slocum under him, was at Chattanooga ready to lead them against Johnston, who at Dalton, just across the Georgia line, had an army of 100,000 guarding the railway center at Atlanta one hundred miles below. Banks held New Orleans, commanding the Department of the Gulf. The remaining Union forces were scattered among many garrisons.

Grant's purpose, in a word, was to crush Lee and Johnston and smother the Confederacy, which involved the capture of Richmond and Atlanta and shutting off the few remaining breathing-places on the coast through which the South could touch the sea — Mobile, Savannah, Charleston, and Wilmington, protected by Fort Fisher. To Sherman he gave orders "to move against Johnston's army, to break it up and to get into the interior of the enemy's country as far as you can, inflicting all the damage you can against their war resources." Banks was to seize Mobile; but Banks was busy on expeditions in Arkansas and Louisiana inspired from Washington, and missed his opportunity. Grant's first idea for

Sherman was to slice Georgia from Atlanta after whipping Johnston's army, and join Banks at Mobile, but this was subsequently changed by force of circumstance and Sherman's genius, and Sherman mowed his swath through to Savannah and then north through both Carolinas, whence he could press Lee upwards from the south while Grant pressed down upon the other side. "I do not propose," Grant wrote him, "to lay down for you a plan of campaign, but simply lay down the work it is desirable to have done and leave you free to execute it in your own way."

For the first time since Sumter the keys controlling all the Northern armies were in a single hand, and when everything was ready for the word, Grant touched them all at once. From Culpeper, where he had pitched his tent, the signal flashed for every general to move on the 4th of May; Meade against Lee, Sherman against Johnston, Butler toward Richmond, Sigel along the Shenandoah. From that time till the end, Grant kept his finger on the pulse of all his armies. While he was hammering away at Lee and Richmond, he was sending daily orders also to every captain under his command. No other general since war was known had, while himself in action on the field, handled the maneuvers of so many armies scattered over so broad a territory and centered

toward a common aim. Lee was responsible only for his own command. Davis in Richmond, a West Point graduate who had seen service in the war with Mexico, disposed the other Southern armies in the field.

Now came a cruel test of fiber, such as few other men were ever called upon to face. With seasoned armies at his call, ample in size and skillfully disposed, Grant had prepared for every physical contingency — supplies, equipment, all the necessities for active service, a commonplace of war in which he was himself adept and for which he now had at his side his own superior in Quartermaster-General Rufus Ingalls; he had unusual knowledge of the field of operations gained from a study of the late campaigns, together with his Indian instinct for topography, a sixth sense of his which some called genius; for all agree that at a glance he used to master a strange map or catch the guiding military features of a chartless and bewildering country. But with all his foresight he had not quite foreseen the quality of Lee. It was Lee's vigilance which upset his first attempt to hammer down the Southern forces by assault.

Moving his army quickly across the Rapidan on the morning of the 4th of May, Grant had thought to clear the tragic tangle of the Wilderness with its sad memories of Chancellorsville, before he fell upon the

enemy, but Lee, who had once fought with Hooker on that very ground successfully against great odds, took the chance of meeting Grant's superior forces on a field where he had already demonstrated that victory did not necessarily attend the heaviest battalions.

The two days' battle of the Wilderness with its ghastly toll which Lee precipitated on the 5th of May brought home to Grant the horror of the path in which his feet were set. There were hours in which defeat was hovering close; disaster had never pressed him quite so hard; and with it comes a human touch which we would not forego.

Rawlins and Bowers both say that when the first news reached him from the right indicating complete repulse and officer after officer rode up with new details, Grant, realizing that he faced the crisis of his life, still gave his orders calmly and coherently without a sign of undue tension; but when all proper measures had been taken and there was nothing else to do but wait, he "went into his tent and throwing himself face downward on his cot gave way to the greatest emotion," without uttering a word. He was stirred to the very depths of his soul. Not till it was plain that the enemy was not pressing his advantage did he entirely recover his composure.[1]

[1] *Under the Old Flag*, vol. I, p. 390.

Now we come to a revealing and dramatic episode in Grant's career. Lee with his hard-fought forces for the third time lay near the Rapidan facing a hostile army on its Southern side. He had twice seen the Army of the Potomac, once under Pope, once under Hooker, pushed back across the stream, when they had thought to march toward Richmond, but now he saw an enemy which had failed to break his lines crouched for another spring. Grant in the opening encounter of his Virginia campaign, disastrous though it may have seemed, had forced his army forward and had held his advance. His loss was nearly 18,000 men, but Lee, considering his inferior strength, had suffered more. The next night Grant was headed south toward Richmond. It is told that, as he rode in silence in the dusk along his shattered ranks, his worn and wounded soldiers saw which way his face was turned and rose up from the ground with cheers. His mute assurance of immediate advance, after their long acquaintance with procrastination and retreat, inspired them with a trust in their new chief which could not afterwards be shaken. As for Grant it was a disclosure of his soul. This reticent, shy, tender-hearted citizen, who shrank from giving others pain and sickened at the sight of blood, had without faltering kept his feet upon the road which led through slaughter. He felt that in no other way could the

Confederacy be quickly overthrown; it was the way of mercy in the end.

"I shall take no backward steps," Grant wrote to Halleck. For thirty days he hammered at the enemy, rained heavy blows upon Lee's head; hurled his men frequently against Lee's weakening lines, engaged in daily skirmishes, defied the rules and precedents of war by frontal charges on the enemy intrenched, costing both armies dearly in the toll of wounds and death. There had been nothing like it in the world before. Lee was forced backwards step by step on Richmond, returning blow for blow, the two contending armies leaving a trail of carnage from the Wilderness through Spotsylvania Court-House, with its five days' fighting and its "bloody angle" at the salient, the crossing of the North Anna River to Cold Harbor, where, with the spires of Richmond almost in sight, the final stand was made, and where Grant was repulsed with heavy loss after a frontal charge which he admitted later that he ought never to have ordered, but which blazes like a beacon disclosing the unflinching courage of the Northern volunteer, just as Pickett's hopeless charge ordered by Lee at Gettysburg still enshrines Southern gallantry. Porter has told how, on the night before the charge, while walking among the troops he saw the soldiers pinning slips upon their blouses, on which each had written

his name and home so that his body the next night might not lie unidentified.

"I propose to fight it out on this line if it takes all summer," Grant had written Halleck from Spotsylvania, but at Cold Harbor his gallant army had their fill. After the Wilderness, Lee had not once accepted battle in the open, but had sought intrenched positions to withstand attack. It was a new and strange experience for him. This master in the artistry of war now found his match in one less skilled in tactics but stronger in offense and in tenacity. No matter how he played his tempered sword, no matter how he turned and stepped with faultless strategy, there stood Grant facing him like a decree of Fate.

At last both Lee and Grant viewing their haggard armies were content to change the character of the campaign. After Cold Harbor they never fought each other face to face. Grant had not been able, as he had hoped, to crush Lee north of Richmond, but that was only one link of his plan. The second was to throw his army to the south side of the James, seize Petersburg, which controlled the approach to the Confederate Capital twenty miles below, besiege Lee in Richmond or follow him south if he should retreat. Therefore, on the 5th of June, while the dead and wounded at Cold Harbor still lay on the ground, he

wrote Halleck that he should throw his army across the James as soon as possible, cut off all sources of supply, and press the enemy from the other side. Swiftly and silently he marched around Lee's flank for fifty miles, to the southeast, eluding him completely, and on the 15th of June, while Lee was guessing where the enemy might be, Grant wired to Washington that the Army of the Potomac would cross the James on pontoon bridges the next day, and that he would have Petersburg secured if possible before Lee got there in much force. Lincoln wired back: "I begin to see it; you will succeed. God bless you all."

CHAPTER XX

FROM COLD HARBOR TO PETERSBURG

FROM the Wilderness to Cold Harbor, Grant had hammered Lee for seventy miles and had lost over 40,000 men, of whom 10,000 had been killed. In each engagement his losses had been fairly matched by Lee's, except at Cold Harbor; and the net benefit had been with Grant. The Army of the Potomac had been sadly shattered, but Lee's army had been shattered too, and Lee had fewer men to spare. Yet it had cost Grant some repute in Washington. While Spotsylvania was in fight, Lincoln told a crowd of serenaders, "I know that General Grant has not been jostled in his purposes, that he has made all his points, and to-day he is on the line as he purposed when he moved his armies." "He has the grip of a bull-dog," he told Frank Carpenter the painter; "when he once gets his teeth in nothing can shake him off"; and two weeks later he endorsed Grant's declaration that "everything looks exceedingly favorable for us." It was after Cold Harbor that he wrote: "I begin to see it; you will succeed." But others had less confidence than Lincoln. "All un-

der God depends on Grant," wrote Chase. "So far he has achieved very little and that little has cost beyond computation." Grimes, of Iowa, wrote: "He has lost a vast number of men and is compelled to abandon his attempt to capture Richmond on the north side, and cross the James River. The question is asked significantly, why did he not take his army south of the James River at once and thus save seventy-five thousand men?"

Grimes had not fully fathomed the significance of Grant's campaign; and those who criticized him, because McClellan had maneuvered nearer Richmond without much fighting and without much loss, failed to remember that McClellan's aim was to invest the rebel Capital, while Grant primarily was after Lee, not Richmond; that McClellan had abandoned all he gained, while Grant held his advance, and that McClellan, having neared his goal with little damage to the enemy, fell back, while Grant, contesting every hard-fought step, had chopped deep into Lee's defense. If Grant had gone toward Richmond first by sailing up the James, he would have found Lee fixed in the Confederate Capital in the best possible position to withstand a siege against far greater numbers, while rebel troops would have been free to roam the State and threaten Washington. There would have been many months of siege and

fighting. The easier-seeming way would have been harder in the end.[1]

Had it not been for blunders by the Army of the James, Grant, when he crossed the river, would have found Butler's troops in Petersburg to welcome him, thus sparing him ten months of siege, and Lee with Richmond might have fallen speedily, for Petersburg, twenty miles to the southeast, a railroad center on the Appomattox, was the real key to Richmond. When in the first week of May, Butler had been sent up the James, the plan was that he should take Petersburg and batter at the gates of the Confederate Capital, while Grant kept Lee engaged, or else by threatening it divert Lee from Grant's front; but Butler, ignoring

[1] I remember asking the General why he had not invested Richmond, as he had invested Vicksburg and starved out Lee. "Such a movement," said the General, "would have involved moving my army from the Rapidan to Lynchburg. I considered the plan with great care before I made the Wilderness move. I thought of massing the Army of the Potomac in movable columns, giving the men twelve days' rations, and throwing myself between Lee and his communications. If I had made this movement successfully — if I had been as fortunate as I was when I threw my army between Pemberton and Joe Johnston — the war would have been over a year sooner. I am not sure that it was not the best thing to have done; it certainly was the plan I should have preferred. If I had failed, however, it would have been very serious for the country and I did not dare take the risk. . . . If it had been six months later, when I had the army in hand, and knew what a splendid army it was, and what officers and men were capable of doing, and I could have had Sherman and Sheridan to assist in the movement, I would not have hesitated for a moment." (Young, vol. II, p. 307.)

Petersburg, tried to seize Drewry's Bluff, under the very eyes of Richmond, and beaten back with heavy loss, withdrew into the curious pocket of the James known as Bermuda Hundred, where he was "bottled up" safe from attack, but worthless as a part of Grant's command.

He could now have taken Petersburg with ease and held it pending Grant's arrival, for the place was guarded by a feeble garrison; but he assigned the task to "Baldy" Smith, lately transferred to his command, who after an assault on June 15, carrying the outside works, withdrew without pursuing his advantage for reasons never adequately explained, and when the next day he was ready for a second trial, Beauregard had filled the town with rebel troops.

When Grant approached the town he found it strongly garrisoned. The place, which should have welcomed him had Butler's army done their part, repulsed three days' assault; he lost 10,000 men. His army were disheartened because they did not enter on the 15th as they had hoped. After Cold Harbor and the crossing of the James, they had thought to have a respite from fighting against odds; but here they found themselves at once in the old desperate game. Lee, having learned at last where Grant had reappeared, had brought his army up to Petersburg,

and on June 18 Grant gave directions that there should be no more assaults.

From that day till the spring of 1865, Meade's army lay in front of Petersburg holding the town in siege, sending out expeditions, recuperating broken regiments, hardening raw recruits, many of them bounty-lured, keeping Lee occupied. Grant set up his tent at City Point, the junction of the Appomattox and the James.

The next two months were gloomy in the North. They have been called the darkest of the war. Election was near at hand. Lincoln had been renominated on June 6, with Andrew Johnson for his mate; Frémont had been named by a little group of radical Republicans who thought that Lincoln was too slow; it was known that McClellan would be nominated by the Democrats. It seemed as if the Union armies everywhere were held in check, while early in July Lee had sent Early flying through Maryland raiding the country up to the very edge of Washington and throwing the Capital into a panic, Grant unsuspicious of the move till he began to get inquiries from Stanton, followed by frantic calls for help.

While Grant was fighting through to Petersburg, Sherman in the West was forcing Johnston back upon Atlanta, dislodging him from one intrenched position and another, while he conducted a retreat as

masterly as Lee's before Grant, and Davis having foolishly put Hood in Johnston's place because of failure to arrest the enemy's advance, Sherman, after pounding Hood and crippling him in the last week of July, remained in check before Atlanta for a month.

Lincoln, at the request of Congress, fixed a day of humiliation and prayer, but pending that he justified his faith by works in issuing on July 18 a call for 500,000 volunteers, 200,000 more than Grant himself at the same time was asking for, and on the 17th of August, as if in response to Northern clamor that Grant be superseded by McClellan, he was wiring Grant, who had expressed unwillingness to break his hold: "Neither am I willing. Hold on with a bull-dog grip and chew and choke as much as possible."

It was on August 23 that Lincoln penned and signed the memorandum which he had each member of his Cabinet endorse unread and which remained unopened till November 11: —

"This morning, as for some days past, it seems exceedingly probable that this Administration will not be reëlected. Then it will be my duty to so coöperate with the President-elect as to save the Union between the election and the inauguration; as he will have secured his election on such ground that he cannot possibly save it afterwards."

During these gloomy days Grant had his own an-

noyances. His major-generals were at loggerheads. Meade was unpopular; had scolded Warren; had rebuked Wilson because a Richmond newspaper charged his men with stealing negroes, horses, silver plate, and clothing on a raid. There was talk of superseding Meade. But the most vexatious quarrel was in the Army of the James. Smith was forever quarreling with Gillmore and Butler fussed with both. Gillmore was soon eliminated, but Smith and Butler squabbled all their lives. Smith, a West Point soldier with a brilliant record, an engineer of proved ability, perhaps too much addicted to maneuvers, irascible, fault-finding, and opinionated, had made a fatal slip at Petersburg. Butler, a blustering, contentious politician in a uniform, bitterly hostile to the West Point regulars, teeming with ingenious schemes, and reveling in Gargantuan blunders, unbridled in ambition and audacity, a stench in controversy, the Thersites of the war, when in command of troops was a grotesque and tragical mistake. Since neither Smith nor Butler had been broken to the harness, they could not pull together. One of them had to go, and Grant chose Butler for the sacrifice. Then overnight, after a call by Butler at Grant's quarters, the order was reversed. Butler was retained and Smith relieved from duty: just why has been in controversy ever since.

Smith wrote for Lincoln's eye a letter charging that Butler, having seen Grant in his cups, had blackmailed him, and this interpretation has found a place in history; but Grant had weathered charges of that kind before without a whimper when he had fewer friends; he had no need to fear them now. We cannot credit the result to such a threat by Butler, unless we shall assume, as some have thought, so slimy is the trail of this old quarrel, that there could be no infamy which he would not embrace, and even then we cannot think that Grant, as happened later, should become his friend and write about him kindly in his book; for Grant was not mean-spirited. Smith's punishment can be accounted for on other grounds. His temper sentenced him to exile if Butler was to stay; and besides, he had whipped Grant over Meade's shoulders by tactlessly abusing Meade to Grant for the disaster at Cold Harbor, for which he must have known that Grant was himself to blame.

It is far more likely that Butler's neck was saved by Lincoln, who, with his reëlection in the balance, feared to let loose upon the voters of the north a Douglas Democrat with a war record, a grievance, and a poisoned tongue. Later Butler was ordered to New York to guard against election riots, and subsequently, after his fiasco at Fort Fisher, he was sent home to Lowell "for the good of the service," Grant

writing Stanton on January 4, 1865, "In my absence General Butler necessarily commands, and there is a lack of confidence felt in his military ability, making him an unsafe commander for a large army. His administration of the affairs of his department is also objectionable."

CHAPTER XXI

SHERIDAN, SHERMAN, THOMAS

EVEN as Lincoln penned his gloomy memorandum of August 23, the skies were clearing. Farragut's operations at Mobile, which had been going on for weeks, were already crowned with victory, though the news had not come North. On September 2, while the Democrats in their convention at Chicago were resolving that the war had been a failure, Sherman was entering Atlanta, whence he had driven Hood the day before, leading into the rebel stronghold with hardly any loss the army he led out of Chattanooga four months before, thus tearing out of the Confederacy its chief manufacturing center and dépôt of supplies. On September 3, Lincoln, by proclamation, summoned the people of the North to offer thanks to God for Union triumphs at Atlanta and Mobile.

Up to the time that Grant came East, the cavalry had been held in some contempt by the commanders of the Army of the Potomac, available for picket duty and for little else. "Who ever saw a dead cavalryman?" was a Service jest. But Grant drafted Sheridan to transform Meade's cavalry into a fight-

ing force, and Sheridan, unknown east of the Alleghanies except for the assault on Missionary Ridge, had startled Meade by telling him that the mounted men should be concentrated to fight the rebel horse instead of doing routine guard and picket duty for the infantry. When Meade asked who would protect the transportation trains, cover the front of moving infantry columns, and secure their flanks from intrusion, he had another shock from the pugnacious little Irishman, — he was only thirty-three, stood five feet five, and weighed one hundred and fifteen pounds, — who said that with 10,000 mounted men he could make it so lively for the rebel cavalry that the flanks and rear of the Army of the Potomac would require little or no defense, and that moving columns of infantry should take care of themselves. He hoped to defeat the enemy in a general engagement and move where he pleased, breaking Lee's communications and destroying his resources.

Meade later had a peppery interview with Sheridan, in which the young man told him he could whip J. E. B. Stuart, the Confederate cavalry leader, if Meade would only let him try. When Meade reported it to Grant, Grant's only comment was, "Did he say so? Then let him go out and do it!" Whereupon Sheridan went out, and on the 11th of May, at Yellow Tavern, within six miles of Richmond,

whipped Stuart's forces and killed Stuart himself, inflicting on the Confederate mounted troops the worst defeat that had befallen them. Then Sheridan made an independent raid, broke up the railroads that connected Lee with Richmond, and frightened the Confederate Capital, penetrating its outer fortifications, though that was not his aim.

Early, returning from his raid on Maryland, controlled at Winchester the fertile Valley of the Shenandoah, to which the rebel army looked for food that fall, and Grant picked Sheridan to operate against him, though Stanton had objected to putting Sheridan in command of the department because he was too young. "I see you played around the difficulty," Lincoln said to Grant, "by picking Sheridan to command the boys in the field." "I want Sheridan put in command of all the troops in the field with instructions to put himself south of the enemy and follow him to the death," Grant wired to Stanton. "Wherever the enemy goes, let our troops go, also"; and Lincoln, seeing the dispatch, wrote back: "This, I think, is exactly right as to how our forces should move; but please look over the dispatches you may have received from here ever since you made that order, and discover if you can that there is any idea in the head of any one here of 'putting our army south of the enemy' or of 'following him to the death' in

any direction. I repeat to you, it will neither be done nor attempted, unless you watch it every day and hour and force it."

Grant knew Sheridan better than Washington. He instructed him, on August 5, that in pushing up the Shenandoah Valley it was desirable that nothing should be left to invite the enemy to return. "Take all provisions, forage, and stock wanted for the use of your command. Such as cannot be consumed, destroy." Then in September, having put Sheridan in charge of a new division, and having visited him to find out how he lay, he gave the order to "Go in," and Sheridan "went in" at once at Winchester, flashing Grant that he had "sent Early's army whirling up the Valley." Just a month later came Cedar Creek and Sheridan's ride, transforming panic-stricken flight into resplendent victory. The little cavalry leader in one summer had dashed into history as one of the great figures of the war and had revolutionized the theory of cavalry service for all wars to come.

"As a soldier, as a commander of troops, as a man capable of doing all that is possible with any number of men," Grant said years later, "there is no man living greater than Sheridan. He belongs to the very first rank of soldiers, not only of our country, but of the world. I rank Sheridan with Napoleon and Frederick and the great commanders of history. No

man ever had such a faculty of finding out things as Sheridan, of knowing all about the enemy. He was always the best informed man of his command as to the enemy. Then he had the magnificent quality of swaying men which I wish I had — a rare quality in a general."

Sherman had no sooner lighted in Atlanta than he began to think of longer flights. Grant had suggested slicing Georgia to the Gulf, but Sherman had a vision of marching to the sea. "If you can whip Lee," he wrote Grant, "and I can march to the Atlantic, I think Uncle Abe will give us a twenty days' leave of absence to see the young folks." Hood was getting active; Sherman had sent Thomas to Nashville to protect Tennessee. He would leave Tennessee to Thomas, destroy Atlanta, and move to Charleston or Savannah. "I can make the march and make Georgia howl," he wrote. He thought Hood would be forced to follow him, but at any rate, "I would be on the offensive; instead of guessing at what he means to do, he would have to guess at my plans." Lincoln and Stanton were solicitous; "a misstep by General Sherman might be fatal to his army." But Grant, though dubious at first, approved the plan. Thomas objected, and Sherman argued with him. He knew he must succeed, for if he failed, "this march would be adjudged the wild adventure of a crazy fool." He

would demonstrate the vulnerability of the South and make its people feel that war and individual ruin were synonymous. Hood crossed the river into Tennessee, and Grant thought Hood should be destroyed before the march began, but Sherman thought it was a scheme to lure him out of Georgia, and Grant said, "Go as you propose." Sherman had perfect faith that Thomas could handle Hood, and having sent him Schofield's corps for an emergency, destroyed Atlanta with its factories and supplies, cut loose November 12 from all communication with the North, and for a month was swallowed up in Georgia with 60,000 men.

Hood, forced to choose between following Sherman or invading Tennessee, began to move toward Nashville with over 40,000 men. At Franklin, on his way toward Nashville, he found Schofield with his corps of 30,000; made a desperate assault, and was repulsed with frightful loss. He followed Schofield on to Nashville and sat down before the city, his army now reduced to 26,000, while Thomas held the town with nearly twice Hood's force. Thomas had told Sherman to have no fear about Hood. "If he does not follow you I will then thoroughly organize my troops, and I believe I shall have men enough to ruin him unless he gets out of the way very rapidly." He now took time to organize, waiting for Wilson and his

cavalry to get equipments; and thus put Grant and Lincoln to a hard test of patience. With his numerical supremacy they could not understand why he delayed attacking Hood. "This looks like McClellan and Rosecrans strategy, to do nothing and let the rebels raid the country," wired Stanton to Grant. "The President wishes you to consider the matter."

Grant had never valued Thomas at his real worth, and he knew that in Hood's place he would himself set out at once on an invasion of the North, eluding Thomas and crossing the Ohio. Were Hood to do this, it would be a heavy blow. All would be criticized for letting Sherman disappear; it might be necessary to divert troops from Virginia, which perhaps would mean a loss of months in getting Lee. And Grant was later justified in his belief, when Hood himself wrote that he then had dreams of conquest, defeating Thomas, seizing Nashville for a base, raiding Kentucky, threatening Cincinnati, and marching a victorious army through the gaps of the Cumberland Mountains to join Lee, whip Grant and Sherman in succession, and sweep down on Washington with the combined armed forces of the Confederacy.[1] Fate had now delivered Hood into the hands of Thomas and Thomas seemed to toy with Fate. Grant sent dispatches on December 2 urging

[1] *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, vol. IV, p. 427.

him to take the offensive. Thomas replied that in two or three days he would probably be ready. Four days passed and Grant dispatched a peremptory order: "Attack Hood at once and wait no longer for a remount of your cavalry. There is great danger of delay resulting in a campaign back to the Ohio River." Thomas answered that he would obey, though "I believe it will be hazardous with the small force now at my service."

Nothing happened. Then Grant lost his patience; for once seemingly cast aside his usual restraint and poise. "If Thomas has not struck yet," he wired to Halleck on December 8, "he ought to be ordered to hand over his command to Schofield. There is no better man to repel an attack than Thomas; but I fear he is too cautious to ever take the initiative." The next day he directed Halleck to relieve Thomas and put Schofield in command. Thomas, hiding his grief, replied with dignity: "I regret that General Grant should feel dissatisfaction at my delay in attacking the enemy. I feel conscious that I have done everything in my power to prepare and that the troops could not have been gotten ready before this, and that if he should order me to be relieved I shall submit without a murmur. A terrible storm of freezing rain has come on since daylight which will render an attack impossible until it breaks." Grant sus-

pended the order, but after two days' further waiting, with eager interchange of telegrams, he ordered Logan to Nashville to replace Thomas in command of the Army of the Cumberland. In his anxiety he started West himself, but on his way at Washington, on December 15, got word that Thomas had attacked, and then that Hood was routed with Thomas in pursuit. The battle of Nashville, on December 15 and 16, was the most complete victory won by the Union forces during the rebellion, a perfect battle in the eyes of experts in the science of war. Hood's army was so badly beaten that when after the pursuit he left its wreckage on the south side of the Tennessee, it hardly numbered 15,000 men, and was soon disintegrated save for a few who turned up afterwards with Johnston's little force in North Carolina. Grant did not quarrel with success. He asked that Thomas be made a Major-General in the regular army, overwhelmed him with congratulations, wrote in his report that the defeat of Hood was so complete that it would be accepted as a vindication of the successful general's judgment.

On the 10th of December, thirty days after he cut loose from his communications at Atlanta, Sherman could see Savannah. His march of three hundred and sixty miles through hostile territory had been a holiday, and on the 21st he occupied the town and

offered it to Lincoln as a Christmas present for the North. Half of the task Grant set himself when he came East was now accomplished. Organized rebellion west of the Alleghanies had been crushed. The whole Southwest was open to the Union troops whenever they saw fit to occupy it.

Sherman for the moment far outdazzled Grant in popular esteem. The fine audacity of his accomplishment had caught the fancy of the world. Lincoln congratulated him: "The undertaking being a success the honor is all yours; for I believe none of us went further than to acquiesce." Some would have made him a Lieutenant-General and put him over Grant, who to appearances had loafed at City Point, while his subordinates were winning victories. "I would rather have you in command than anybody else," Sherman wrote Grant, "for you are fair, honest, and have at heart the same purpose that should actuate all. I should emphatically decline any commission calculated to bring us into rivalry"; and Grant replied: "No one would be more pleased at your advancement than I, and if you should be placed in my position and I put subordinate, it would not change our relations in the least. I would make the same exertions to support you that you have ever done to support me, and I would do all in my power to make our cause win."

CHAPTER XXII

PEACE

GRANT, for the moment partly in eclipse, bided his time. Events were shaping the success of his grand strategy, which he now knew the end would justify. His lines were tightening on the Confederacy. Sherman was on his way north from Savannah, cutting a path of devastation across the Carolinas; marching four hundred miles through winter sleet and icy floods, quagmires and swamps and rutty roads, a bitter contrast to the Georgia frolic. Fort Fisher, after many trials, was seized at last by Terry brilliantly in early January, and Wilmington, which it protected, the sole remaining port of the Confederacy, fell into Union hands as had already happened with every other rebel stronghold south or west of Richmond. Lee's army could no longer live upon the crops of the Southwest or tap its former granary in the Valley of the Shenandoah. The time was near at hand when the compressed Confederacy, upon which Grant was closing in, must either choke or starve unless Lee's ragged and emaciated troops slipped through the Union lines to the Southwest. No recruits were coming, and there could be no hope for a

successful fight against the Union army, which now, almost encircling Petersburg and Richmond after months of siege, was hardening the latest levies into veterans. While Lee had lost his sources of supply, Grant had at call the teeming farms and factories of the North. Davis had reached the limit of his credit, while Lincoln still had full financial reservoirs to drain.

Yet Davis could not bring himself to think his cause was lost; he was for goading his exhausted armies to fight on, and if compelled to flee, he would transfer the Richmond archives to a roving capital, and keep rebellion bristling in the Alleghany wilds. His patriotic selfishness would not have stopped at any sacrifice by his devoted men.

City Point, with Grant's log-cabin headquarters, was a secondary Union Capital. Lincoln came there with Seward and other members of the Cabinet; members of Congress drifted in to look things over; there was an unbroken line of Northern visitors. At the end of January the "Peace Commission," Stephens, Campbell, and Hunter, came from Richmond on their futile errand, and Grant, who was a soldier not vested with authority in such affairs, asked Lincoln to come down with Seward to hear their tale.

Stephens, who then for the first time saw Grant,

has said that he was never more surprised in any man. "He was plainly attired, sitting in a log cabin busily writing on a small table by a kerosene lamp. There was nothing in his appearance or surroundings which indicated his official rank. There were neither guards nor aides about him. Upon Colonel Babcock rapping at his door the response, 'Come in,' was given by himself"; and he soliloquizes: "In manners he is simple, natural, and unaffected; in utterance frank and explicit; in thought, perception and action, quick; in purpose fixed, decided, and resolute." [1]

The commissioners met Lincoln and Seward on Lincoln's boat in Hampton Roads. The peace they had in mind did not contemplate the dissolution of the Confederacy, which was of course the one condition Lincoln could consider; but they learned from him that the Thirteenth Amendment abolishing slavery had just been passed by Congress, that the restoration of the Union was the first requirement in any peace, and that the way for this to be assured by them was "by disbanding their armies, and permitting the National authorities to resume their functions."

The conference had its value in revealing Lincoln's mind. "Stephens," he said, "if I were in Georgia and entertained the sentiments I do, . . . I would go

[1] *Recollections of Alexander H. Stephens,* pp. 79, 80; 401–02.

home and get the Governor of the State to call the Legislature together and get them to recall all the state troops from the war; elect senators and members to Congress, and ratify the constitutional amendment prospectively so as to take effect — say in five years. Such a ratification would be valid in my opinion. . . . Slavery is doomed. It cannot last long in any event, and the best course, it seems to me, for you public men to pursue would be to adopt such a policy as will avoid as far as possible the evils of immediate emancipation." He said he should be in favor individually of the Government paying a fair indemnity to the owners. He knew some who were in favor of an appropriation as high as four hundred million dollars for this purpose. This was on February 3, and two days later, at Washington, Lincoln laid before his Cabinet a message which he proposed to send to Congress, recommending a joint resolution empowering the President to pay to sixteen Southern and border States four hundred million dollars in six per cent government bonds as compensation for their slaves, the distribution to be dependent "on the ceasing of all resistance to the National authority by the first of April next." The members of the Cabinet were all opposed, and Lincoln seemed surprised. "How long will the war last?" he asked; and when no one answered, he said: "A hundred days. We are

spending now in carrying on the war three millions a day which will amount to all this money besides all the lives"; and with a deep sigh he added, "but you are all opposed to me and I will not send the message."

In the last week of March, Sherman reached Goldsboro, in North Carolina, and found Schofield waiting for him there, while Johnston with a remnant of his old army hung about Raleigh, fifty miles away.

Grant, waiting for the spring campaign which he had planned to end the business, indulged his troops in desultory fighting mostly by Sheridan and Wilson, who with their mounted horse were cutting Lee's communications, raiding his outposts, smiting stray regiments now and then, ruffling the rebel Capital's defense. At last the time approached for operations all along the line, and Lee, foreseeing this, thought to anticipate it by breaking through the Union lines at Petersburg, and by forced marches, eluding Grant, join Johnston in the Carolinas for a final stand. It was a desperate chance, dramatically taken, resulting in repulse.

On the 29th of March, Grant bade farewell to City Point, Lincoln's "God bless you" lingering in his ears. It is written that as his wife stood in his cabin door saying good-bye, he held her tight and kissed her many times with tenderness unusual, even for

him. From that time to the end he mingled with his army at the front, taking the same exposure as his men.

It fell to Sheridan to strike the last swift blow, when on the 1st of April at Five Forks his forces stormed the intrenched enemy, slashing their way through raking fire, charging with drawn sabers and fixed bayonets, the little General himself leading his men, waving his battle-flag, praying, swearing, flashing from one point to another, till Merritt in a final dash carried the earthworks with a wild hurrah. Few battles like it ever have been waged, and none has since been fought on this side of the Atlantic with which we can compare its brilliant daring strategy. "It seems to me," said Porter, "that you have exposed yourself to-day in a manner hardly justifiable on the part of a commander of such an important movement"; and Sheridan replied, "I have never in my life taken a command into battle and had the slightest desire to come out alive unless I won."

As soon as he was told what Sheridan had done, Grant ordered an assault on Petersburg, and on the morning of the 2d it was made, without great loss to Lee, who knew, of course, that after Five Forks he could not hope to hold the place. That night, in cover of the darkness, Lee's men filed out of Peters-

burg, and shortly after daybreak Grant rode in. Then Lincoln came and seized Grant's hand and thanked him. "I had a sort of sneaking idea all along that you intended to do something like this," Lincoln said; "but I thought some time ago that you would so maneuver as to have Sherman come up and be near enough to coöperate with you." And Grant, revealing a fine tactfulness, replied: "I had a feeling that it would be better to let Lee's old antagonists give his army the final blow and finish up the job. The Western armies have been very successful in their campaigns, and it is due to the Eastern armies to let them vanquish their old enemy single-handed."

That same day Davis fled from Richmond and Ewell's troops absconded, letting the Union forces in. To Richmond Lincoln went from Petersburg; but not Grant, who was too busy keeping an eye on Lee, with Ord and Meade and Sheridan dogging Lee's trail. Lee, with his poor, starved army, was trying to reach Johnston, and at last, near Jetersville, Sheridan found him still militant, though in a sorry way. But Meade, who had the old idea of occupying Richmond, forgetful of Grant's first instructions, had disposed his troops with that in view, leaving a space between the Union lines through which Lee might escape. Sheridan alarmed, and having no authority to change Meade's plan, sent Grant a secret message

telling him the tale and adding, "I wish you were here yourself."

Grant was immediately on his way to Sheridan and learned at Farmsville of fighting still going on with some of Lee's divisions. Word came in that Ewell had said the rebel cause was lost, and on April 7, at 5 P.M., Grant, thinking further bloodshed wicked, now that fighting was in vain, wrote to Lee asking the surrender of his army. There was need of diplomacy. Lee, not admitting that his case was hopeless, asked the terms which would be offered on condition of surrender, and Grant replied with delicacy: "Peace being my great desire, there is but one condition I would insist upon, namely, that the men and officers surrendered shall be disqualified for taking up arms against the Government of the United States until properly exchanged. I will meet you or will designate officers to meet any officers you may name for the same purpose, at any point agreeable to you, for the purpose of arranging definitely the terms upon which the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia will be received." Lee held back. He tried to think the time had not yet come for abdication of his cause. "I cannot, therefore, meet you with a view to surrender the Army of Northern Virginia, but as far as your proposal may affect the Confederate States forces under my command and tend to the restora-

tion of peace, I shall be pleased to meet you at 10 A.M. to-morrow on the old stage-road to Richmond, between the picket lines of the two armies."

Grant, who was suffering excruciating pain, sleepless, pacing up and down his room, his splitting head held in his hands, was at first cast down by this reply, but wrote the next day in response: "As I have no authority to treat on the subject of peace, the meeting proposed for 10 A.M. to-day could lead to no good. I will state, however, General, that I am equally anxious for peace with yourself and the whole North entertains the same feeling. The terms upon which peace can be had are well understood. By the South laying down their arms they will hasten that most desirable event, save thousands of human lives, and hundreds of millions of property not yet destroyed." Before Lee got this letter, Lee had held a council of his officers, who were insistent on a new assault in hope of breaking through the Union lines, and Gordon, leading the assault by Lee's direction, suffered a repulse. This misadventure, and the temper of Grant's note, magnanimous, yet placing upon Lee the sole responsibility for any further loss of life, resulted in a quick compliance. "I now request an interview, in accordance with the offer contained in your letter of yesterday," he wrote; and when Grant read the note, the pain from which he had been suf-

fering disappeared. "I will push forward to the front for the purpose of meeting you," he replied; then riding on with members of his staff, joined on the road by Sheridan and Ord, he came at noon to Appomattox Court-House, near which the Union and Confederate forces lay on their arms, and entered the brick dwelling with its tawdry furnishings where Lee and his great hour awaited him.

The story has been written many times, but no American can weary of its telling. Lee, dressed immaculately in a uniform of gray which emphasized his faultless bearing and his noble form; Grant, as he has been pictured heretofore, clad in a private's blouse, soiled with much riding, on which were sewn the shoulder straps to let his soldiers know his rank; Lee carrying a handsome sword, but Grant with none.

"What General Lee's feelings were, I do not know," writes Grant. "They were entirely concealed from my observation; but my own feelings, which had been quite jubilant on the receipt of his letter, were sad and depressed. I felt like anything rather than rejoicing at the downfall of a foe who had fought so long and valiantly and had suffered so much for a cause, though that cause was I believe one of the worst for which a people ever fought and one for which there was the least excuse."

Grant talked awhile of ordinary things, ignoring

the momentous theme that brought them there, and gently leaving that for Lee to introduce, — about old army times, service in Mexico, where he was a subaltern and Lee Scott's chief of staff, — till Lee, reminding him that they had business in hand, said he had asked the interview to learn the terms that it was proposed to give his army. Grant told him, and they fell again in talk till Lee suggested that the terms be written out. Then, turning to a table, Grant wrote as he was wont to write, swiftly and clearly without erasure, not knowing when he took his pen what the first word would be, but knowing what was in his mind and wishing to express it unmistakably. "As I wrote on," he says, "the thought occurred to me that the officers had their own private horses and effects which were important to them, but of no value to us; also that it would be an unnecessary humiliation to call upon them to deliver their side arms." When Lee read over that part of the terms, "he remarked with some feeling, I thought, that this would have a happy effect upon his army." [1]

[1] *General R. E. Lee,*
Commanding Confederate States Armies.
General:

In accordance with the substance of my letter to you of the 8th inst., I propose to receive the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia on the following terms, to wit:

Rolls of all the officers and men to be made in duplicate, one copy to be given to an officer designated by me, the other to be

Then Lee spoke about his mounted men, most of whom owned their horses, and asked if he should understand that these should be retained. This had not been in the terms as written out, but Grant said that he hoped and thought that there would be no further battles in the war. "I took it that most of the men in the ranks were small farmers. The whole country had been so raided by the two armies that it was doubtful whether they would be able to put in a crop to carry themselves and their families through the next winter without the aid of the horses they were then riding." So he said that any man who claimed to own a horse or a mule might take it home. Lee remarked again that this would have a happy effect, and straightway wrote out his acceptance of Grant's terms. Then there was a final touch. As Lee was going, he spoke again about his men, told Grant

retained by such officer or officers as you may designate. The officers to give their individual paroles not to take up arms against the Government of the United States until properly exchanged, and each company or regimental commander sign a like parole for the men of their commands.

The arms, artillery and public property to be packed and stocked and turned over to the officer appointed by me to receive them. This will not embrace the side arms of the officers nor their private horses or baggage. This done, each officer and man will be allowed to return to their homes, not to be disturbed by the United States authorities so long as they observe their parole and the laws in force where they may reside.

Very respectfully,

U. S. Grant,

Lieutenant-General.

that they were badly off for food; that for some days they had been living only on parched corn; he would have to ask for rations; and Grant told him to send his commissary and quartermaster to Appomattox Station, where his men could get all the food they needed from the trains which Sheridan had stopped.

Then Lee went out, and as he passed, the aides, who had been waiting on the steps, arose respectfully. He did not seem to notice them, but looking over the green valley toward his surrendered army he smote his hands abstractedly until his orderly led up his horse. He took the bridle. Grant walked by and touched his hat, and Lee, returning the salute in silence, rode back to his own lines.

That afternoon Grant telegraphed to Stanton in three lines informing him of Lee's surrender.[1] When his men learned what had been done, they began a salute in honor of the victory; but Grant, hearing the first volley, ordered them to stop. He would not add to the distress of a defeated foe. Thus he had stopped the cheers at Donelson and Vicksburg.

[1] HEADQUARTERS, APPOMATTOX COURT-HOUSE VIRGINIA,
April 9, 1865, 4.30 P.M.

Hon. E. M. Stanton, Secretary of War,
Washington.

General Lee surrendered the Army of Northern Virginia this afternoon on terms proposed by myself. The accompanying additional correspondence will show the conditions fully.

U. S. GRANT,
Lieutenant-General.

The next morning he rode out beyond the Union lines toward Lee's headquarters, and Lee, perceiving who it was, rode out to meet him. They talked again, this time about the need for peace. Lee hoped that there would be no further sacrifice of life, but could not say; the South was a big country and time might pass before the war could be entirely ended; he could not foretell. Then Grant told him that his influence was greater than that of any other man in the Confederacy and said that if he should now advise surrendering all the armies, no doubt his counsel would be followed with alacrity. But Lee said that he could not do that without consulting Davis, and Grant knew that there would be no use in urging him to do what he did not think was right. So Lee went back again among his men, and shortly home to lay aside his uniform. Davis was even then in flight toward Texas, hoping to keep rebellion there alive; but he was caught in Georgia on the way.

Grant went to Washington at once. They would make much of him, but he would not be lionized. He talked with Lincoln, but declined an invitation to Ford's Theater, hurrying on to Burlington, New Jersey, where his children were at school. At Philadelphia he heard of Lincoln's murder and came back to be a tower of strength in the grief-stricken city.

In Washington, a few days later, he received from

Sherman the news of Johnston's surrender, and learned the impossible terms which Sherman had innocently given, terms which invaded the province of politics and reconstruction, and which inflamed the North when Stanton made them public. Stanton's announcement conveying the information that Sherman had been disciplined, and carrying a sinister suggestion that the hero of the march through Georgia was implicated in a scheme to let Confederate officials get away with plunder from the Richmond banks, for a time made Sherman a target for the people's wrath. Grant was sent to Raleigh to cancel Sherman's terms and order the resumption of hostilities. Instead of superseding Sherman and humiliating him before a beaten enemy, he tactfully allowed him on his own initiative to reverse his course and to exact surrender on the terms Grant gave to Lee according to instructions from the powers in Washington, then stole away from Raleigh without letting any one but Sherman know that he was there.

Thus the war ended, a gentle spirit pervading the spent armies North and South, due in chief measure to the generosity of Grant, who shortly after received his army's salutations in the solemn pageant of the Grand Review crowned with the glory of his country's gratitude.

CHAPTER XXIII

A GENERAL WITHOUT HIS ARMY

At the crest of his renown Grant found himself in Washington encumbered with high military rank, but shorn of power. The day he came from Appomattox he put himself to work curtailing the expense of war by canceling the orders for superfluous munitions and supplies. He set out also to disband the armies, so that in a little while he, who yesterday had headed half a million men, commanded a small force of regulars, in numbers hardly more imposing than Scott had handled just before the war. Congress in 1866 revived for him the grade of General, but did not couple with it new battalions or brigades. There was not much for him to do except to trim the ragged edges of rebellion by clearing up the stragglers in the South who were reluctant about laying down their arms. He was a stranger to the Capital, and had a limited acquaintance with public men.

He had brought with him several members of his staff; but there were hardly half a dozen men in Congress whom he knew except by name, and in the Cabinet, Stanton and Seward were the only two with whom he had been closely brought in touch.

Seward, he distrusted because of his diplomacy and indirection.

Stanton he disliked instinctively, and his dislike was aggravated by the Sherman episode. Stanton, a zealot, deeply versed in Bible lore, was an unamalgamated mixture of strangely contradictory traits, domineering, superstitious, cowardly, intolerant, sympathetic, devoid of loyalty to his co-workers, though passionately loyal to the Union cause, consistent only in his fervid love of country and of power and in undeviating lack of tact. With Stanton, formally, Grant had to keep on friendly terms, and so with Johnson, who was really weak and vacillating, though outwardly pugnacious, and who, when entering on his new and onerous responsibilities, could think of nothing more appropriate to say than to extol his own past record, concluding with the words: "The duties have been mine, the consequences God's."

Grant had now to deal in strange surroundings with politicians whom he did not know, coping with questions altogether new. The kindly feeling of the South, stirred by his chivalry toward Lee, was strengthened by his stand against the threat of Johnson to try Lee for treason in defiance of the promise of his parole. A super-serviceable judge at Norfolk had the grand jury find indictments against some of

the paroled Confederates, and when Lee heard that he, too, would be indicted, he wrote to Grant reminding him of the protection he understood was granted him and applying for amnesty and pardon. Grant needed no reminder. He promptly forwarded to Johnson, through the Secretary of War, the request for amnesty, earnestly recommending that it be granted, and sent Lee's letter to the Secretary with this endorsement: —

"In my opinion the officers and men paroled at Appomattox Court-House and since, upon the same terms given Lee, cannot be tried for treason, so long as they observe the terms of their parole. This is my understanding. Good faith as well as true policy dictates that we should observe the conditions of that convention. . . . The action of Judge Underwood in Norfolk has already had an injurious effect, and I would ask that he be ordered to quash all indictments found against paroled prisoners of war and to desist from the further prosecution of them."

Grant was not content with written words. He hurried to the White House, where for once he found his tongue in controversy. "A general commanding troops," he said, "has certain responsibilities and duties and power which are supreme. . . . I have made certain terms with Lee, the best and only terms. If I had told him and his army that their

liberty would be invaded, that they would be open to arrest, trial, and execution for treason, Lee would have never surrendered, and we should have lost many lives in destroying them. . . . I will resign the command of the army rather than execute any order directing me to arrest Lee or any of his commanders so long as they obey the laws."

That was a contingency which Johnson dared not face. He could not hope to put his influence to the test against the all-pervading popularity of Grant. The indictments were withdrawn, though Johnson still denied to Lee his amnesty.[1]

In Texas Kirby Smith was slow in his surrender, and Grant rushed Sheridan to force his hand, much to the discontent of Sheridan, who greatly longed to lead his troopers in the Grand Review. But Grant had more in mind than Kirby Smith's chastisement. Grant had always looked on Maximilian's venture as

[1] In November, 1865, Grant gave to Longstreet, who from West Point days had been his friend, a letter to the President recommending Longstreet's pardon. Armed with this letter, Longstreet sought Johnson. "The President was nervous, ill at ease, and somewhat resentful . . . and at length closed the interview by saying, 'There are three men this Union will never forgive — they have given it too much trouble. They are Jefferson Davis, Robert E. Lee, and James Longstreet.' General Longstreet said, 'Those who are forgiven much, love much, Mr. President.' Johnson answered, 'You have high authority for that statement, General, but you cannot have amnesty.'" (*Lee and Longstreet at High Tide*, p. 106.)

closely intertwined with the rebellion, since it had been encouraged by the heads of the Confederacy and instigated by the European powers when Lincoln's hands were tied and Washington could not effectively protest. He held the French invasion to be an act of war on the United States, and thought that we should treat it so whenever we were free to strike. He often spoke of it to Lincoln while at City Point, and urged that when the war was over troops should be thrown across the border to drive the French invaders out.

He thought then that it would have a noble influence at home if soldiers of the North and South, recently fighting one another, could unite in war against a common foe, and while he had no definite response from Lincoln, he inferred that Lincoln sympathized with him in this. Grant always held Napoleon III in detestation and would have taken keen delight in his discomfiture. He looked upon him as the special foe of the United States and liberty.

Though Lincoln's hands were tied, Johnson's were now free; and Sheridan was an ideal instrument, impatient to be used. In middle June Grant wrote to Johnson proposing "open resistance to the establishment of Maximilian's government in Mexico." If such a government should be established, he could "see nothing before us but a long, expensive, and bloody war. . . . Every act of the empire of Maxi-

milian has been hostile to the United States. . . . What I would propose would be a solemn protest against the establishment of a monarchical government in Mexico by the aid of foreign bayonets. . . . How all this could be done without bringing on an armed conflict, others who have studied such matters could tell better than I."

But Johnson was not greatly interested. He had fish of his own to fry at home and found it easy to let Mexico alone, especially as Seward, who was always at his ear, was altogether hostile to the use of force, hoping to get everything we needed through the means of diplomatic notes.

To Sheridan's disgust his cavalry could only chafe on this side of the Rio Grande, while Grant recorded an experience in rank without authority — not his last, for the unlovely days of Reconstruction were at hand.

CHAPTER XXIV

RECONSTRUCTION

THERE is no period of our history more mortifying to our national pride than that just following the Civil War, no time when in the hour of need exalted statesmanship was more nearly in eclipse. We can now only guess what would have been the course of Reconstruction if Lincoln had not died; though we know broadly what he had in view to heal the wounds of war. The charity which permeates the scriptural phrases of the second inaugural is a precious heritage, and is in keeping with constructive plans which he proposed for the regeneration of the South, as well as with his words at Hampton Roads. What he did in Louisiana while the war was on gives us an inkling of what he would have tried to do in other States after the war was over; but the strong opposition to his Louisiana policy in Congress must be accepted as foreshadowing the hostile attitude of radical Republicans if he had sought to carry through a policy like that in time of peace.

He would, no doubt, have found the people with him, for a time, and would have had an influence commensurate with his fame upon Republicans who

against Johnson went almost to the limit of fanaticism. The ultimate result would surely have been better, but at a cost to Lincoln's name. If he had tilted with an intolerant Congress in a time of peace, no matter what the outcome, we almost certainly should have a different Lincoln in our legends than we have to-day.

Lincoln outlined a Reconstruction policy in his message of December, 1863, in accordance with which State Governments were set up in Louisiana and Arkansas by order of the military commander of the department acting under the President's direction. This did not meet the views of Congress. In 1864 a bill was passed providing for appointment of provisional governors in the Confederate States for purposes of civil administration until State Governments should be recognized. No State Governments were to be formed until after the suppression of military resistance to the United States and until the people had "sufficiently returned to their obedience to the Constitution and laws." The bill provided that the President should not proclaim a State Government as reëstablished without the assent of Congress. It emancipated all slaves.

The President did not sign the bill, and after adjournment he gave his reasons in a special proclamation; he was not ready to set aside the free State

Constitutions and Governments recently adopted in Louisiana and Arkansas and to declare a constitutional competency in Congress to abolish slavery in States.

Lincoln would have treated each case by itself. He would have let the loyal citizens of a State under the protection of the military governor organize a State Government and adopt a constitution. This was done in Louisiana early in 1864. The constitution adopted there abolished slavery forever, and while restricting suffrage to white males, empowered the Legislature to confer the suffrage on colored men according to the principles laid down by Lincoln, that in the reconstructed States the right of suffrage should be given to "very intelligent" colored people and to those who had "fought gallantly in the ranks."

The question came up in the Senate in February, 1865, on a joint resolution recognizing this Government as the legitimate Government of Louisiana. The resolution had the support of all the Republicans in the Senate except five radicals led by Sumner, and it would have been adopted had it not been for Sumner, who, declaring, "I shall regard its passage as a national calamity," prevented a vote before the close of Congress on the 4th of March by dilatory motions.

Thaddeus Stevens would have none of Lincoln's

plan; after the war the South must be treated like any other conquered territory.

Sumner held that the President should not do the work of Reconstruction by military order, but that Congress should do it by law. He wanted Congress to impose indiscriminate negro suffrage on the States which had seceded as a condition precedent to their restoration. Lincoln believed that the State through moral pressure should be induced to give the suffrage to those "colored people who were qualified for it."

It is a striking fact that Lincoln's very last public utterance was on this subject. Speaking on Tuesday evening, April 11, three days before his assassination, to a crowd gathered at the White House, he commented on the constitutional question as to whether the seceded States were still in the Union or out of it, a question which during the next three years occupied a share of executive and legislative attention far out of proportion to its real importance.

"As it appears to me, that question has not been nor yet is a practically material one and that any discussion of it while it thus remains practically immaterial could have no effect other than the mischievous one of dividing our friends. As yet, whatever it may hereafter become, that question is bad

as a basis of a controversy, and good for nothing at all — a mere pernicious abstraction. We all agree that the seceded States, so-called, are out of their proper practical relation with the Union and that the sole object of the Government, civil and military, in regard to those States is to again get them into that proper practical relation. I believe that it is not only possible, but in fact easier, to do this without deciding or even considering whether these States have ever been out of the Union, than with it. Finding themselves safely at home, it would be utterly immaterial whether they had ever been abroad."

In the light of history, these words seem reasonable; yet Sumner, writing of them to his friend, Dr. Lieber, said: "The President's speech and other things augur confusion and uncertainty in the future, with hot controversy. Alas! Alas!" And strange as it may seem to us to-day, Sumner was not alone even in that hour of triumph and good-will.

A few hours later and Lincoln was dead. Andrew Johnson in a tragic flash was President of the United States. It was the sport of Fate that to one so totally unlike the gentle, wise, and patient Lincoln should have been assigned the task which he laid down, yet while the nation was still plunged in grief there were not lacking honest-minded men who thought they saw the guiding hand of Providence in what was done.

George W. Julian, of Indiana, a leading member of the House, tells how on the very day of Lincoln's death he spent most of the afternoon in a political caucus held for the purpose of considering the necessity for a new Cabinet and a line of policy less conciliatory than that of Mr. Lincoln, "and while everybody was shocked at his murder, the feeling was nearly universal that the accession of Johnson to the Presidency would prove a Godsend to the country. As for Mr. Lincoln's known policy of tenderness to the rebels which now so jarred upon the feelings of the hour, his well-known views on the subject of Reconstruction were as distasteful as possible to radical Republicans."

The next day, Wade, Chandler, Julian, and other radical Republicans called on the new President. Wade exclaimed: "Johnson, we have faith in you. By the gods, there will be no trouble now in running the Government." Johnson thanked him and replied in words which came often to his lips: "I hold that robbery is a crime; rape is a crime; *treason* is a crime; and *crime* must be punished. Treason must be made infamous and must be punished, and traitors must be impoverished."

Yet, shortly, Johnson was vehemently agitating policies which went much farther toward the rehabilitation of the old leaders in the seceded States

than those which Lincoln had gently urged, and the very radicals who had hailed him as a savior were damning him for treason to the cause. A few months later, John Hay, revisiting Washington after a brief tour of duty abroad, recalls that the first words of his old friend, Harry Wise, were, "Everything is changed; you'll find us all Copperheads." While U. H. Painter, war correspondent, Lincoln's and Stanton's confidant and friend, declared, "You will find the home of virtue has become the haunt of vice." [1]

In an atmosphere like this, stifling with intrigue and passion, with an ignorant, stubborn, and loquacious President, a Cabinet jealous and divided among themselves, a Congress groping in the dark, the honest-minded, trustful, straight-thinking Grant, after forty years of obscurity and four years of life in camp, received his first lesson in politics.

Johnson believed with Lincoln in the indestructibility of the States, but his methods were radically different. On May 29, 1865, hardly a month from the time he assumed office, he issued his proclamation of amnesty and pardon to all who would take an oath to observe all laws and proclamations made during the war with reference to the emancipation of slaves, excluding from its provisions, however,

[1] *Life of John Hay*, vol. I, p. 251.

fourteen specified classes. Among the classes specified were not only most of the men who had held civil or military offices of any distinction, but also all whose taxable property was estimated at over twenty thousand dollars. Thus, with or without intention, he would eliminate from the new order of the South most members of that intellectual, landed, and pedigreed aristocracy against which he had set his face throughout his political career. He would help create a new governing class, to be chosen chiefly from the poor-white population, who hated the negro with a peculiar hatred arising from conditions prior to the war, when of these two classes socially submerged, the slaves, by very virtue of their slavery, came in more sympathetic contact with the aristocracy and held the freemen in contempt.

Johnson, obstinate, narrow, suspicious, and disputatious, a poor white with a poor white's prejudices, a Southerner with a Southerner's illogical adherence to a strictly logical interpretation of the Constitution, a Democrat and partisan by instinct and training, was temperamentally incapable of coöperation with Northern Republicans like Sumner, Chandler, Stevens, and Butler, radical to the last degree and indisposed themselves to coöperation except on lines which they themselves laid down. Prior to his accession to the Presidency he had hardly been north of

Mason and Dixon's line. His contact with Northern men and Northern sentiment was confined to his experience in Washington and with such Federal officers as he had dealings with while military governor of Tennessee. He was unfamiliar with large cities, had no first-hand knowledge of industrial communities, and was profoundly ignorant of the manifold activities upon which the prosperity of the North has always rested. The North in turn knew almost nothing good of him, except that he had been stoutly for the Union, while others in the South, of wider culture and under great moral obligations to the Union, had been either willfully or weakly disloyal. Fresh with all was the humiliating spectacle of his installation into office as Vice-President with his pitiful, rambling, maudlin speech, just a few days before he was called so unexpectedly to succeed to greater power than had been entrusted to any other American except Lincoln.

A wiser man would have been humble and prayerful under such a load, striving with all his might so to conduct himself as to win support from the strong men in Congress upon whom he must depend; but Johnson, driven by a perverse fate, set out to force them to his own way of thinking without even trying o discover whether there might not be a common ground upon which all could stand while struggling

with a gigantic problem. True, he might not have got along with Sumner and Stevens in any circumstances. Neither might Lincoln if he had lived. But Lincoln would at least have tried.

The one man whom Johnson went out of the way to make his friend was Grant. With Lincoln dead, he recognized in Grant, not only the strongest personal force in the North, but the man in the North for whom since Appomattox the conquered Southerners had the highest esteem, and Johnson was shrewd enough to see the advantage of having Grant on his side. Lacking real knowledge of Northern sentiment, he looked to Grant as its embodiment. He sought Grant out. He sent him almost daily notes. He formed a habit of dropping in casually at Grant's house or office; he made it a point to attend Mrs. Grant's receptions. He sought every opportunity to have Grant by his side in public.

There was a degree of shrewdness in this course, which was in marked contrast with Stanton's tactlessness. Ever since Grant's arrival in Washington, Stanton had taken obvious delight in asserting his authority, sending for Grant to come to his own office on all sorts of occasions and in all sorts of weather, though Grant was thus frequently compelled to cross the broad and muddy expanse of Pennsylvania Avenue and climb painfully up the War

Department stairs; for those were the days before asphalt pavements, telephones, and electric elevators, and the headquarters of the Army was in a building widely separated from the office of the Secretary of War.

Grant, throughout the early months of the Administration, conducted himself with great good sense, accepting the President's attentions without comment and without committing himself to any line of policy. In fact, the general course of the Administration, from the time of the proclamation of amnesty of May 29, up to the time when Congress met on December 5, had much to commend it.

While holding that the question of suffrage was a matter for the States themselves to determine, Johnson was favorable to a qualified suffrage for the negro, although at that time the negro had the right to vote in only six Northern States — Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and New York; and New York required a property qualification for the negro voter which was not necessary for the white. In light of all conditions Johnson showed breadth of view as well as cunning when he wrote in a telegram to Governor Sharkey, of Mississippi, on August 15, 1865, with reference to the work of the Constitutional Convention: —

"If you could extend the elective franchise to all

persons of color who own real estate valued at not less than two hundred and fifty dollars and pay taxes thereon, you would completely disarm the adversary and set an example the other States will follow. This you can do with perfect safety, and you thus place the Southern States in reference to free persons of color upon the same basis with the free States. I hope and trust your convention will do this."

If Johnson had been blessed with Lincoln's tact or could have used the prestige of his name, who can say that he might not have brought Congress into line with some such programme, thus obviating the tragedy of immediate universal negro suffrage? But it was inevitable that Congress should have a hand in the work of Reconstruction, especially with Sumner the leader of the Senate and Stevens the leader of the House, two strong, persistent idealists and radicals, determined upon universal suffrage for the recently emancipated slaves. "Refer the whole question of Reconstruction to Congress where it belongs," Sumner cried in August. "What right has the President to reorganize States?" — a perfectly logical and defensible position, but significant in contrast to Sumner's earlier willingness in April to have Reconstruction by executive decree so long as he supposed the franchise would be conferred upon the negro through this means. Sumner was less concerned about

the encroachment of the Executive than about giving the negroes in the South the indiscriminate right to vote.

It was during this period of executive supremacy, with eight States reconstructed by executive decree and awaiting the action of Congress on the admission of their Senators and Representatives, that Grant was sent by Johnson on a mission to the Southern States in order that he might report to Congress the feeling among those lately in rebellion. Grant left Washington on November 29, 1865, and visited Raleigh, Charleston, Savannah, Augusta, and Atlanta. His trip was short, but everywhere he "said much and conversed freely with the citizens of those States, as well as with officers of the army who have been stationed among them."

"I am satisfied," he wrote in his official report under date of December 18, "that the mass of thinking men of the South accept the present situation of affairs in good faith.

"My observations lead me to the conclusion that the citizens of the Southern States are anxious to return to self-government within the Union as soon as possible; that while reconstructing they want and require protection from the Government; and that they are in earnest in wishing to do what is required by the Government, not humiliating to them as citizens,

and that if such a course was pointed out they would pursue it in good faith. It is to be regretted that there cannot be a greater commingling at this time between the citizens of the two sections and particularly of those entrusted with the lawmaking power."

He did not meet any one, "either those holding places under the Government or citizens of the Southern States," who thought it practicable to withdraw the military from the South at present. "The white and black mutually require the protection of the General Government," and the reason he gives is that "four years of war, during which law was executed only at the point of the bayonet throughout the States in rebellion, have left the people possibly in a condition not to yield that ready obedience to civil authority the American people have generally been in the habit of yielding."

General James H. Wilson, then in command at Macon, Georgia, and once a member of Grant's staff, relates how on this trip Grant summoned him to Atlanta and how they sat up all night discussing the war and the problem of Reconstruction. In the conversation, while Grant "did not hesitate to discredit the judgment of Andrew Johnson nor to conceal his dislike of Stanton's arbitrary ways, he distrusted the senatorial group with which Stanton was associated, and declared that his own views

were not only thoroughly conservative, but thoroughly kind as to the generals and politicians of the South."

The Southern people at this time looked for harsh treatment, especially in view of Johnson's repeated threats to make treason odious and to impoverish the traitors. They would not have been surprised if there had been an attempt to confiscate their property and distribute it among the emancipated slaves. Such a punishment they would have submitted to sullenly, and almost anything short of that they would have accepted as a disagreeable price for resuming their place in the Union.

If at this period men like Sumner, Stevens, and Wade had been willing to confer with Johnson, and had not been radically insistent upon securing for the negro rights and privileges which the negro was not qualified to exercise, Reconstruction might have resulted far differently, and we might have been spared the sorry spectacle of a bitter fight between Congress and the President with the unseemly impeachment proceedings. Fessenden and Henry Wilson, more generous and farseeing than Sumner, were inclined to think the President right in all questions except suffrage; and Wilson wrote: "We have a President who does not go as far as we do in the right direction; but we have him and cannot change

him, and we had better stand by the Administration and bring it right."

Of the military commanders in the South, one of the most sagacious was General John M. Schofield, who years later became Lieutenant-General of the Army on the death of Sheridan. He had attributes of statesmanship, and might with great advantage have been consulted by the civilians who had to solve in Washington the grave problems of Reconstruction. With regard to the proposal of Chase, Sumner, and other radicals, that the negro should be given the immediate right to vote, a step which he contended rightly was unconstitutional — he wrote on May 10, 1865: —

". . . My second reason for objecting to the proposition is the absolute unfitness of the negroes as a class for any such responsibility. They can neither read nor write. They have no knowledge whatever of law or government. They do not even know the meaning of the freedom that has been given them, and are much astonished when they are informed that it does not mean that they are to live in idleness and be fed by the government. . . . I have yet to see a single one among the many Union men in North Carolina who would willingly submit for a moment to the immediate elevation of the negro to political equality with the white man. They are all,

or nearly all, content with the abolition of slavery. Many of them are rejoiced that it is done. But to raise the negro in his present ignorant and degraded condition to be their political equals would be in their opinion to enslave them (the white citizens). If they did not rebel against it, it would only be because rebellion would be hopeless. A government so organized would in no sense be a popular government."

If Reconstruction could have been left to soldiers like Grant and Schofield, who had fought the South, knew its leaders, and held their respect, the result would have been infinitely better than that which came from the unseemly quarrels of civilian politicians.

If there was ever a time when a military government might have proved beneficent in the United States, this was that time. No soldier could have made a sorrier mess of Reconstruction than the political leaders who wrangled it into shape, and almost any one of the great Union generals could have been trusted to do a better job. Under a military government the country would have been spared the miserable squabbles in Washington, the bungling attempts of Johnson to force upon the country policies the good features of which he inadequately comprehended and the bad features of which were bound to

raise impossible expectations among the Southern people, the persistence of the radicals in Congress in imposing indiscriminate negro suffrage upon resentful communities, the appointment of provisional civilian governors, the letting loose of a devastating swarm of carpet-baggers upon a proud and helpless people, the imposition of proscriptive qualifications which debarred the best men in the South from holding office, thus limiting those who exercised the suffrage to a choice of carpet-baggers and negroes for places of political and judicial responsibility.

But it is idle to conjecture what might have happened if Grant or Sherman or Thomas or Schofield had been in supreme control. With all their fame the military leaders of the Civil War were in positions of hopeless subordination, taking orders from civilians far less familiar than they with Southern necessities, in most cases wholly ignorant of the Southern temper, many of them actuated by vindictiveness or personal ambition, the best of them obsessed with the delusion that for the negro there could be no middle ground between the suffrage and slavery, that there could be no charm in liberty without a vote.

CHAPTER XXV

LESSONS IN POLITICAL INTRIGUE

GRANT would have been far better off if he had kept away from Washington, but it was ordered otherwise, and he who had commanded all the Union armies in the field was at the beck and call of men who could not lead a regiment. True, he was learning something of the devious ways of politics in preparation for the baffling tasks before him; but what he learned was at a heavy cost. "Do not stay in Washington," Sherman had written him in affectionate warning when he was made Lieutenant-General. "Halleck is better qualified than you to stand the buffets of intrigue and policy. . . . For God's sake and for your country's sake, come out of Washington!"

And four years later, in his letter to the President, after Grant's wretched fray with Johnson, Sherman returned to the same theme, this time not as a seer of evil but as its chronicler: —

"I have been with General Grant in the midst of death and slaughter, — when the howls of people reached him after Shiloh; when messengers were speeding to and from his army bearing slanders to

induce his removal before he took Vicksburg; in Chattanooga when the soldiers were stealing the corn of the starving mules to satisfy their own hunger; at Nashville when he was ordered to the 'forlorn hope' to command the Army of the Potomac so often defeated — and yet I never saw him more troubled than since he has been in Washington, and been compelled to read himself a 'sneak and deceiver' based on reports of four of the Cabinet, and apparently your knowledge."

The period between these letters had been packed with incident. Grant had come out of war triumphantly, and with the death of Lincoln found himself a giant plagued by pygmies, a figure looming higher in the estimation of the people than he himself quite realized, yet led about by an ill-bred, accidental President, and subject to humiliating treatment by a domineering Secretary, only to be entangled at the end in a dispute between these two which raised with partisans of each a question of his own veracity.

If at the close of war, when conditions were nearly ripe for a real welding of spirit North and South, Grant had been in supreme control, that work might have gone on to a complete fruition, for even Johnson, in spite of all his truculence and the instinctive prejudice against him, commanded for a time a measure of support. Johnson perversely managed

first to alienate the South by vehement denunciation of its leaders and then the North by equally violent urging of his policies when sane persuasion might have brought North and South together in lasting unity of sentiment; Grant would have had no animosities and would have had no policy except the cultivation of good-will. But as General of the Armies, subject always to authority and military discipline, he could not influence events and had to watch them drift. His ideas on the negro problem had been of slow growth. Before the war he had not been an abolitionist nor even an anti-slavery man, but he came to see that slavery must go.

Twenty years later in his book he wrote: "I do not believe that the majority of the Northern people at that time were in favor of negro suffrage. They supposed that it would naturally follow the freedom of the negro, but that there would be a time of probation in which the ex-slaves could prepare themselves for the privileges of citizenship before the full right would be conferred; but Mr. Johnson, after a complete revolution of sentiment, seemed to regard the South, not only as an oppressed people, but as the people best entitled to consideration of any of our citizens. This was more than the people who had secured to us the perpetuation of the Union were prepared for, and they became more radical in their views."

And again: "But for the assassination of Mr. Lincoln, I believe the great majority of the Northern people, and the soldiers unanimously, would have been in favor of a speedy reconstruction on terms that would be the least humiliating to the people who had rebelled against their Government. They believed, I have no doubt, as I did, that besides being the mildest, it was also the wisest policy. The people who had been in rebellion must necessarily come back into the Union and be incorporated as an integral part of the nation. . . . They surely would not make good citizens if they felt they had a yoke around their necks."

Yet with feelings at the outset of consideration toward the South, with his instinctive chivalry, without natural sympathy for radical men or measures, he was driven by events, by the tactlessness of the President, by the perverseness of the time, into a position where he could align himself no otherwise than with the advocates of wholesale suffrage for the negro in the South, protected if need be by military force.

CHAPTER XXVI

JOHNSON'S BREAK WITH CONGRESS

JOHNSON'S programme met with no organized resistance up to December, 1865, when the new Congress gathered after a nine months' vacation from the 4th of March. Indeed, the people of the North left to themselves seemed to approve it. Beginning in August, State after State in the South, acting in accordance with the Executive's decree, had held conventions which repealed or nullified the ordinance of secession, abolished slavery, and in most cases repudiated the debts incurred in war. Mississippi, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, North Carolina, fell into line, balking only at the President's proposal in some cases that the negro should be given qualified suffrage. The men who sat in constitutional conventions and in legislatures chosen under the new order were of high character, willing to accept conditions. The "erring sisters," chastened in spirit, were ready to come home. It looked as though a reunited country would stand behind the President. Republican and Democratic conventions in Northern States vied with one another in endorsing his policy and pledging their support. Pennsylvania, under the lead

of Stevens, and Massachusetts, under that of Sumner, alone refused assent. Andrew and Morton, the best of the War Governors, urged coöperation with the President, expressing sympathy for the South and opposing unconditional suffrage for the blacks. Even Stanton, as late as May, 1866, expressed approval of Johnson's acts up to the time that Congress met. His quarrel was of gradual development. It was not until after Congress adjourned in July, 1866, that the open rupture came.

With the gathering of Congress, Stevens in the House and Sumner in the Senate set out to organize the opposition. Up to that time there were no differences which could not have been reconciled, and for nearly three months thereafter nothing happened which might not have been adjusted with fair concession on each side. Sumner and Stevens with their radical proposals could not have carried Congress with them if Johnson had been inclined to counsel with the majority, yielding here and there for harmony; for Sumner and Stevens wanted to go much farther and faster than the great body of Northern men were ready then to follow. And while these two detested Johnson, they wrangled with each other and in reality had slender bonds of sympathy. Stevens, though a partisan fanatic, was intensely practical. Sumner was a turgid visionary, a devotee, who in

spite of his nobility of purpose could never quite adjust himself to facts.

If Johnson had been wise enough to play on individual traits, as Lincoln doubtless would have done, if he had not persisted in having things exactly his own way, he might have gained all his essentials and the story of his stormy term need never have been told. Reconstruction might have come about in such a manner as to leave lasting friendliness between the sections, with the Southern States restored to their old places in the Union and gradual enfranchisement of the negro as he became qualified to vote.

Few Northern people really thought the negroes should have suffrage right away. They looked for it in time, but with a hazy expectation. On the whole they were amenable to Johnson's plan of admitting the Senators from Southern States and leaving to the States themselves the suffrage question so long as former slaves received protection in their natural rights. In the election held that fall, Connecticut, Wisconsin, and Minnesota had declared specifically against giving the vote to colored persons and in a general way the elections were regarded as an endorsement of the Administration. The people were not concerned about the prerogatives of the Executive and Congress. They were interested in results and Johnson seemed to be doing fairly well. There had

been no impressive number of abolitionists at the beginning of the war, and there was no overwhelming love for the negro at its close. The mass of the people understood that problem of the South better than Sumner or Garrison or Phillips. There were not many who would have been so ingenuous as Garrison on his visit to Charleston in April, 1865, when, overcome by the apparent gratitude of a crowd of twelve hundred emancipated plantation hands, he cried out: "Well, my friends, you are free at last. Let us give three cheers for Freedom"; and was astonished that there was no response. The freedmen did not know how to cheer. Like children they looked on emancipation as a Christmas present. Yet Sumner would have given them the vote at once. Early in December, after informing Gideon Welles in one of his delicious talks, that he had read everything on republican government from Plato to the last French pamphlet, he denounced the President's policy as the greatest and most criminal error ever committed by any government and solemnly asserted that a general officer from Georgia had informed him within a week that the negroes of that State were better qualified to establish and maintain a republican government than the whites.[1] So far credulity could go with a high-minded man.

[1] *Diary of Gideon Welles*, vol. III, pp. 176–81.

The Congress elected a year before, at the same time with Lincoln, had not been chosen with anything like this in view; but the majority were greatly interested in maintaining their prerogatives against executive encroachment and here they were on common ground with Stevens. At the beginning they refused seats to Senators and Representatives from States reorganized under Johnson's plan, thus giving Johnson his contention that Congress was not constituted properly since eleven States remained unrepresented.

The President's first message, written by George Bancroft, was temperate and admirable in tone, met with general approval among the people, and irritated only a few implacables in Congress. Three days before the Senate met, Sumner had talked for two hours and a half with Johnson at the White House, recording his opinion that the President "does not understand the case. Much that he said was painful from its prejudice, ignorance, and perversity," and discontinued all personal relations then and there. On the other hand, John Sherman was writing to his brother, "he seems kind and patient with all his terrible responsibilities." So much depends upon the angle of approach.

Lyman Trumbull, once a Democrat and never a radical Republican, chairman of the Senate Judi-

ciary Committee, reported after the holidays a bill to enlarge the powers of the Freedmen's Bureau so as to secure for the freedmen, among other things, civil rights and "equal and exact justice before the law." The bill passed House and Senate by a two-thirds vote in each, but on February 19 the President vetoed it. Congress had never yet in all its history passed a really important bill over a veto, and did not do so now; but on the next day, February 20, the House adopted a concurrent resolution, reported by Stevens from the Committee on Reconstruction, that no Senator or Representative from any Southern State should be admitted to either body until Congress had declared such State entitled to representation.

Up to this hour Johnson seemed to have the country with him. All the members of his Cabinet, including Stanton, acquiesced. And then his fatal failing, intemperance in speech, worked his undoing. On February 22 a crowd of his supporters who had been meeting in a theater marched to the White House and he went out to see them. Members of the Cabinet urged him not to talk and he said he would follow their advice; but his pet passion overcame him; there were no bounds to his vituperative tongue. Goaded on by the crowd he cried: —

"I look upon as being opposed to the fundamental principles of this government and as now laboring to

destroy them: Thaddeus Stevens, of Pennsylvania, Charles Sumner and Wendell Phillips, of Massachusetts. . . . Are those who want to destroy our institutions and change the character of the government not satisfied with the blood that has been shed? Are they not satisfied with one martyr? . . . Have they not honor and courage enough to effect the removal of the presidential obstacle otherwise than through the hands of the assassin? I am not afraid of assassins!"

In ten minutes he had lowered himself beyond rehabilitation in the country's eyes and had given Congress an advantage that they could not have gained without his aid. From that moment his was a losing cause. Later, Congress passed a Civil Rights Bill. He vetoed it and Congress now established a precedent; it overrode his veto. In June the resolution upon which the Fourteenth Amendment is based was adopted, and in July a new Freedmen's Bureau Bill was passed, in spite of the President's objection. Congress had acquired the habit of defiance. Vetoes had become too cheap and frequent to challenge their respect.

Thus Congress carried through its plan for Reconstruction, moderate and sensible, as a whole, and Johnson saw himself discredited. It was not till June, 1866, that Stanton let the public know that he had opposed the veto of the Civil Rights Bill.

It is not easy now to put one's finger on a serious objection to Johnson's plan divorced from personal dislike of the Executive; but the fact that he had undertaken to reconstruct the Southern States without waiting for Congress to assemble, and had failed to insist upon the franchise for negroes as well as whites, had given his opponents needed ammunition; his own intemperate denunciation had done the rest.

By the same token, in the congressional plan, as crystallized in legislation during that session, one can distinguish little to which Johnson might not with self-respect have given his endorsement. On the whole it was as good a piece of work as could have been expected, opening a path through which the Southern States might have resumed their places in the Union without self-abasement. The Fourteenth Amendment did not impose negro suffrage upon any State, but left that question to the States concerned, subject only to curtailment of representation in proportion to the number of citizens to whom the franchise might be denied. The Freedmen's Bureau Bill and the Civil Rights Bill in the form then passed contained no onerous conditions. The States lately in rebellion were left to the control of their own local affairs.

If Johnson had then only shown a spirit of concession, the Southern question might have been set-

tled with the adjournment of that first session in July, 1866. To his appeal the South would doubtless have listened with respect; but so long as he kept up the controversy and continued his assaults upon the motives of all who took exception to his plan, they would have been superhuman not to wait for terms more satisfying to their pride. Their tardiness, encouraged by Johnson's folly, led to the deplorable enactments later which held the seeds of years of sectional strife.

Elections to a new Congress were to be held in the autumn following adjournment of the first session, and there was nothing to it for Johnson, with his passion for dispute, except to utilize the opportunity to force the North to his own way of thinking. Late in August he set out on the "swing around the circle," taking Grant, Farragut, and several members of the Cabinet on his train.

Grant did not want to go. He had for months been drifting farther and farther away from Johnson. But he was indispensable to Johnson's purpose. In the controversy between the President and Congress it had been assumed both North and South that his sympathies were with Johnson and when he now left Washington in Johnson's company and appeared day after day on the same platform with him, the suspicion was strengthened: but this was all a part

of Johnson's cunning scheme, conceived by Seward, it is said.

Johnson left a vituperative trail in every city of importance between Washington and Chicago. At Cleveland he was manifestly in his cups. And he was hardly started on his trip before the country knew that he was lost. The most praiseworthy cause could not have weathered such a champion. The people were humiliated and ashamed. Grant seized the earliest opportunity to plead sickness, quit the party, and return to Washington. He had seen Johnson at his worst; and he could never hold him in respect again.

Already the relations between Johnson and Stanton were badly strained. Stanton was loath to carry out Johnson's orders interfering with the work of the district commanders in the South, and the President was soon hunting for some one who would be amenable.

Uprisings in the South seemed imminent. There had been riots in New Orleans two days after the adjournment of Congress, July 28, and Grant began to look for trouble. On October 12 he wrote confidentially to Sheridan, who had quit Texas and was in command at New Orleans: "I regret to say that since the unfortunate difference between the President and Congress, the former becomes more violent with the

opposition he meets with, until now but few people who were loyal to the Government during the rebellion seem to have any influence with him. None have unless they join in a crusade against Congress and declare their acts, the principal ones, illegal; and indeed I much fear that we are fast approaching the time when he will want to declare the body itself unconstitutional and revolutionary. Commanders in Southern States will have to take care and see if a crisis does come that no armed headway can be made against the Union."

The result of the elections was cumulative in its irritating effect upon the discredited Johnson. Maine and Vermont in September, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, and Iowa in October, and all the other Northern States in November gave great majorities against the Administration. Only Maryland, Delaware, and Kentucky were Democratic. The Republicans had a larger majority in House and Senate than ever, amply more than the two thirds needed to override a veto of any Reconstruction measure they might see fit to pass.

Another man in Johnson's place would have accepted the result of the elections as determining the question of Reconstruction so far as his administration was concerned, for the Congress just chosen would not expire until his own term ended. Only

colossal egotism or abounding ignorance could have prompted opposition to so overwhelming a majority, and only devotion to an all-absorbing moral issue could have excused it. But Johnson fatuously undertook to thwart the will of Congress, with sorry results both to himself and to the section he set out to serve.

The Southern leaders as a rule would reluctantly have taken the Fourteenth Amendment had it not been for Johnson's influence, but owing to his encouragement, every one of the eleven seceding States in the period between August, 1866, and February, 1867, refused to ratify. As a practical necessity, therefore, Congress was forced to adopt more drastic measures to bring the recalcitrants into line. It was intolerable that the Southern States, who before the war had enjoyed representation in Congress for only three fifths of the number of their slaves, should, as a result of insurrection and defeat, come back into the Union with representation based on the entire number of citizens, both white and black, while only the whites had the privilege of the vote, thus giving the whites of the South, in spite of the terrible loss in Northern lives and treasure during the rebellion a greater proportionate representation than ever in the House and the Electoral College. The Southern leaders would have seen this had they been let alone. But Johnson blocked the way.

CHAPTER XXVII

AT ODDS WITH JOHNSON

GRANT was entirely out of sympathy with Johnson by this time, though as a soldier under orders he did not publicly take issue with his official chief. His immediate superior, Stanton, by the fall of 1866, had gone over boldly to the radicals in Congress, with whom for months he had already been in secret correspondence, so that Grant was in a trying place. We have seen how he wrote to Sheridan, but outwardly he maintained a reticence so complete that only Johnson and some members of the Cabinet suspected how he really felt. In his testimony before the House Judiciary Committee on July 18, 1867, after the quarrel had progressed much farther, he thus explained himself: —

"I have always been attentive to my own duties, and tried not to interfere with other people's. I was always ready to originate matters pertaining to the Army, but I was never ready to originate matters pertaining to the civil government of the United States. When I was asked my opinion about what had been done I was willing to give it. I originated no plan and suggested no plan for civil government. I

only gave my views on measures after they had been originated. I simply expressed an anxiety that something should be done to give some sort of control down there. There were no governments there when the war was over and I wanted to see some governments established and wanted to see it done quickly. I did not pretend to say how it should be done or in what form."

Riots were threatened in Baltimore at election time in November, 1866. It was a controversy between rival boards of police commissioners, one appointed by the Democratic Governor, Swann, the other claiming independent authority. Johnson wanted to send troops to help the Governor to uphold his own commissioners. He had with him all the Cabinet but Stanton. Grant protested earnestly, and when he found the President persisting, he wrote an official letter to the Secretary of War calling attention to the law which specified the only circumstances in which the military forces of the United States could be called out to interfere in state affairs. The troops were not sent and Grant, by his personal influence in two visits to Baltimore, persuaded the contending parties to leave their quarrel to the courts. If Johnson had prevailed, the Federal troops would have been used against the party which had been loyal to the Union and in behalf of former Confederates.

Grant thought he saw here a disloyal intent. Whatever its purpose, he saved an ugly situation.

Maximilian was still in Mexico. Napoleon, yielding to persistent pressure and convinced at last of the futility of his designs, had ordered the French troops withdrawn. He had good reason for this change of policy. Grant two years before had sent Schofield to Texas with secret orders to organize if necessary an army of American volunteers, for enrollment under the Liberal Government in Mexico, to drive out the invaders. He thought that Seward had befogged the issue and that if he had a partiality, it leaned toward imperial success. Grant was insistent on enforcing the Monroe Doctrine, and kept the Minister from France in Washington informed of how he felt. Napoleon knew that Grant would almost certainly in a few months be President, clothed with authority which now he lacked. At last Seward sent Schofield to Paris with instructions to "get your legs under Napoleon's mahogany and tell him he must get out of Mexico." So the French army quit, but Maximilian with quixotic chivalry remained. His fragile empire was already crumbling, and the republican government which we had recognized was coming to its own. There was no special reason why Grant or any other army officer should go to Mexico; yet in the middle of October, just as he had become annoy-

ingly unsympathetic with Johnson's policies, a pretext was found to send him there.

Campbell, who had been appointed Minister a long while before and had dawdled the intervening time away, was due at last to enter on his service, and Johnson ordered Grant to accompany him "to give the Minister the benefit of his advice in carrying out the instructions of the Secretary of State." At the same time Sherman, who had been outspoken in favor of Administration policies, was ordered to Washington, the intention being to detail him to Grant's military duties.

To the amazement of Johnson and Seward, Grant refused to go. He had divined the purpose of the mission. Johnson renewed the order in a day or two. Grant again declined, this time in writing. A little later he was summoned to a Cabinet meeting. The Secretary of State read him detailed instructions for his mission as if nothing unusual had occurred. Grant was not disturbed. He told the President and the Cabinet that he did not intend to go. Turning to the Attorney-General, Johnson exclaimed: "Mr. Attorney-General, is there any reason why General Grant should not obey my orders? Is he in any way ineligible to this position?" "I can answer that question, Mr. President," said Grant, "without referring to the Attorney-General. I am an American citizen

and eligible to any office to which any American is eligible. I am an officer of the Army and bound to obey your military orders. But this is a civil office, a purely diplomatic duty that you offer me, and I cannot be compelled to undertake it." No one replied and Grant left the room.

Even after this the President persisted. Stanton was told to ask Grant to proceed to Mexico; and Grant had to write another letter declining to go.

When Sherman arrived in Washington, he reported first to Grant, who told him what the President had in mind. The rest of the story, as Sherman tells it in his "Memoirs," sheds an interesting light upon the characters of Grant and Johnson. The President's plain misconstruction of Grant's attitude helps to illuminate the controversy between the two over a year later, when the issue of veracity became acute.

"General Grant," says Sherman, "denied the right of the President to order him on a diplomatic mission unattended by troops; said that he had thought the matter over, would disobey the order and stand the consequences. He manifested much feeling and said it was a plot to get rid of him. I then went to President Johnson, . . . who said that General Grant was about to go to Mexico on business of importance and he wanted me at Washington to command the Army in General Grant's absence. I then informed him that

General Grant would not go and he seemed amazed; said . . . that Mr. Campbell had been accredited to Juarez . . . and the fact that he was accompanied by so distinguished a soldier would emphasize the act of the United States. I simply reiterated that General Grant *would not go* and that he, Mr. Johnson, could not afford to quarrel with him at that time." Sherman suggested that if the real object were to put Campbell in official communication with Juarez, the bill could be filled better by Hancock or Sheridan, and that he himself could be sooner spared than Grant, who was engaged in the most delicate and difficult task of reorganizing the Army under the Act of July 28, 1866. "Certainly," answered the President; "if you will go, that will answer perfectly."

So Sherman went to Mexico with Campbell. As he sailed from New York Harbor on the Susquehanna, he turned to the captain and said: "My mission is already ended. By substituting myself I have prevented a serious quarrel between the Administration and Grant." As might have been expected, his journey, from which he returned three months later, was a waste of time.

When the Thirty-ninth Congress met for its second session on December 5, 1866, the Fourteenth Amendment had not yet been ratified. Congress had voted that no Senator or Representative should be ad-

mitted from either of the eleven States which had been in insurrection until the right of such State to representation had been agreed to by both Houses of Congress. A bill proposed by Stevens, and reported from the Committee on Reconstruction in the closing days of the session, providing for the readmission of the seceding States upon the acceptance by them of the Fourteenth amendment, had not become a law.

Congress turned at once to Reconstruction measures. Stevens promptly introduced a bill providing for valid governments in the States still unreconstructed, on the basis of negro suffrage and white disfranchisement. He was goaded to vindictiveness by the contumacy of Southern Legislatures and Johnson's stubbornness, while many who had been inclined to moderation six months before were now ready to take the verdict of the elections as justifying measures as radical as might be urged. The bill, which became known as the Reconstruction Act, brushed aside the State Governments created through executive decree which had been in feeble operation for many months, divided their territory into five military districts, each to be commanded by an army officer of the rank at least of Brigadier-General, who was to be designated by the General of the Army. This bill, unpalatable to a numerous minority of his

own party, because it provided for indeterminate military rule, was whipped through the House by Stevens with a scourge of taunts which brought the tardy into line. While the bill was pending in the Senate, Grant quietly let it leak out that he would rather leave the designation of district commanders to the President than to the General of the Army — and in this form the bill became law over the President's veto on the 2d of March.

As finally enacted, the law provided that Senators and Representatives from a seceded State should be admitted to seats in Congress on the adoption of a constitution providing among other things for universal suffrage without discrimination as to color and the adoption of the Fourteenth Amendment. It was left to the military commander in each district to take the initiative in summoning a convention to pave the way for Reconstruction.

While the struggle between the President and Congress had been going on, Johnson had arbitrarily removed several thousand Republican office-holders and filled their places with his own sympathizers. To meet this, Congress, on March 2, passed over his veto the Tenure of Office Act, which took away from him the power, without the Senate's consent, to remove office-holders originally confirmed by the Senate. His disregard of this act in Stanton's case brought on the

series of events leading up to his impeachment; yet it is a striking fact that Stanton himself, though not then on cordial terms with Johnson, joined with Seward in helping to frame the veto measure which Johnson signed.

Thus the Thirty-ninth Congress, chosen six months before the close of the war and meeting for the first time nine months after Lincoln's death, placed on the statutes over his successor's veto radical measures for the reconstruction of the South which Lincoln would not have stood for and which only a small minority of its own membership would have favored when it first assembled — measures which ushered in a period of racial and sectional hate, of violence and blood-letting, of extravagance, corruption, and national degeneracy for which our history presents no parallel, not even in the stress of civil war. Grant, though the first citizen of the Republic, already set apart for the chief magistracy, had the habit of military subordination so firmly fixed and was so lacking in political experience that he had little influence on legislation. He had to watch the current drift, unconscious, for all that the records show, that he was fated at his entrance upon the Presidency to find a problem confronting him which the wisest and most masterful of statesmen could hardly hope to solve. He had no sympathy with Johnson, Stevens, or

Sumner in their quarrels. He owed them no gratitude for the hateful legacy bequeathed to him by their mistaken zeal.

The new Congress, which met on March 4 in accordance with a law enacted to curb Johnson's control, stirred Johnson's wrath still further by legislation stripping him of authority under the Reconstruction acts. Stanton approved this new legislation. There is evidence that he drafted its principal features. He was outspoken in Cabinet meetings against the President and his associates in the Administration. His breach with Johnson was complete. Congress adjourned, on July 20, to November 3. It was hardly out of the way before Johnson set out to get rid of Stanton and to displace Sheridan. Sheridan had really started the row by removing state and city officers concerned in the New Orleans riots a year earlier and Governor J. Madison Welles, "who," he wrote, was "a political trickster and a dishonest man . . . his conduct has been as sinuous as the mark left in the dust by the movement of a snake."

Before taking definite action Johnson told Grant what he had in mind. This was on August 1. Grant entered a strong protest which he embodied in a letter later in the same day: —

"I take the liberty of addressing you privately on the subject of the conversation we had this morning,

feeling as I do the great danger to the welfare of the country should you carry out the designs then expressed.

"First, on the subject of the displacement of the Secretary of War. His removal cannot be effected against his will without the consent of the Senate. It is but a short time since the United States Senate was in session, and why not then have asked for his removal if it was desired? It certainly was the intention of the legislative branch of the Government to place Cabinet officers beyond the power of Executive removal, and it is pretty well understood that so far as Cabinet ministers are affected by the 'Tenure of Office Bill,' it was intended specially to protect the Secretary of War, whom the country felt great confidence in. The meaning of the law may be explained away by an astute lawyer, but common sense and the views of loyal people will give to it the effect intended by its framers.

"On the subject of the removal of the very able commander of the Fifth Military District, let me ask you to consider the effect it would have upon the public. He is universally and deservedly beloved by the people who sustained this Government through its trials, and feared by those who would still be enemies of the Government. . . .

"In conclusion allow me to say, as a friend, desiring

peace and quiet, the welfare of the whole country North and South, that it is in my opinion more than the loyal people of this country (I mean those who supported the Government during the great rebellion) will quietly submit to, to see the very men of all others whom they have expressed confidence in removed."

Whereupon the President, on August 5, sent Stanton this note: —

"*Sir:* — Public considerations of a high character constrain me to say that your resignation as Secretary of War will be accepted."

To which Stanton immediately replied: —

"I have the honor to say that public considerations of a high character, which alone have induced me to continue at the head of the Department, constrain me not to resign the office of Secretary of War before the next meeting of Congress."

CHAPTER XXVIII

ACTING SECRETARY OF WAR

THWARTED in his demand for Stanton's resignation, Johnson decided to suspend him and put Grant in his place. No one could say with certainty even then just where Grant stood on the disputed questions of the hour. It was a hard part to play, with passion raging everywhere, but he had thus far saved himself from taking sides. Ben Wade, one of the most bitter radicals in Congress, said he had often tried to find out whether Grant was for Congress or for Johnson or what he was for, but never could get anything out of him; "for as quick as he'd talk politics Grant would talk horse." Actually, however, we have seen that Grant was now convinced that the congressional policy, however regrettable in certain features, had become inevitable through Johnson's mistaken course. He believed primarily in strict obedience to the law.

On August 12, 1867, therefore, Johnson sent word to Stanton suspending him from the office of Secretary of War and directing him to turn the records of the office over to General Grant. Grant notified Stanton of his assignment, concluding a courteous note: —

"In notifying you of my acceptance, I cannot let

the opportunity pass without expressing to you my appreciation of the zeal, patriotism, firmness, and ability with which you have ever discharged the duties of Secretary of War."

Stanton responded with equal courtesy; but he enclosed with this communication the copy of a vivid letter which he had sent that same day to Johnson, denying the legality of his suspension and concluding: —

"But inasmuch as the General commanding the armies of the United States has been appointed *ad interim*, and has notified me that he has accepted the appointment, I have no alternative but to submit, under protest, to superior force."

Gideon Welles, the sturdy and vivacious chronicler of individual dislikes, gives in his "Diary" the memorandum of a conversation he had with Grant a few days later at the War Department, in which Grant clearly showed his sympathy with Congress, though not, it must be said, with cogent reasoning, as Welles transcribes his views. "On the whole," comments the controversial diarist, "I did not think so highly of General Grant after as before this conversation. He is a political ignoramus. . . . Obviously he has been tampered with and flattered by the Radicals, who are using him and his name for their selfish and partisan purposes."

It was a mistake for Grant to take Stanton's place. He served as Secretary from August, 1867, to January, 1868; and nothing was so eventful in his service as the manner of his leaving it, although he remedied abuses in administration, and rid the Government of unnecessary waste, in rotten contracts, growing out of war. The people did not understand his attitude. There was no reason why they should. His letter to the President protesting against the removal of Sheridan and Stanton was not published at the time. The North did not appreciate that he had kept the place from falling into the hands of one who might be more subservient to Johnson's whims. They were resentful and indignant at the sacrifice of Stanton and blamed Grant for what looked like acquiescence.

As Grant maintained his taciturnity, no one, outside the Cabinet and his personal staff, suspected the continual friction between the War Department and the White House. He attended Cabinet meetings as seldom as possible and avoided the discussion of political questions, leaving usually as soon as the routine business was ended. He tried to keep his civil and military characters distinct. It was an incongruous combination with a touch of Gilbert and Sullivan. As Acting Secretary at the War Department in the morning he would sign orders to himself as Gen-

eral of the Army and then trudge across the street to Army headquarters, where he would acknowledge their receipt and execute them.

The open break with Johnson came on Sheridan's removal. In that encounter Grant got the worst of it. In giving his order removing Sheridan and putting Thomas in his place, Johnson invited suggestions and Grant replied: —

"I am pleased to avail myself of your invitation to urge — earnestly urge, urge in the name of patriotic people — that this order should not be insisted upon. It is the will of the country that General Sheridan should not be removed from his present command. This is a republic where the will of the people is the law of the land. I beg that their voice may be heard."

This and more like it, so lacking in Grant's usual simplicity and restraint, Johnson punctured with the retort: —

"I am not aware that the question of retaining General Sheridan in command of the Fifth Military District has ever been submitted to the people themselves for determination. . . . General Sheridan has rendered himself exceedingly obnoxious by the manner in which he has exercised the powers conferred by Congress and still more so by the resort to authority not granted by law. . . . His removal, there-

fore, cannot be regarded as an effort to defeat the laws of Congress."

These letters were made public after Sheridan's removal. Johnson was praised in the South for his discomfiture of Grant and Grant was criticized in the North for the feebleness of his stand against Johnson. He might have drawn a lesson from the incident that he was less fit for controversy than command.

Johnson, on December 12, 1867, just three weeks after Congress met again after a long recess, sent a message telling all about Stanton's suspension, fortified with documents and containing interesting revelations in regard to Stanton's own attitude toward the Tenure of Office Act. For an example: —

"Every member of my Cabinet advised me that the proposed law was unconstitutional. All spoke without doubt or reservation, but Mr. Stanton's condemnation of the law was the most elaborate and emphatic. . . . I was so much struck with the full mastery of the question manifested by Mr. Stanton . . . that I requested him to prepare the veto upon this Tenure of Office Bill. This he declined on the ground of physical disability, . . . but stated his readiness to furnish what aid might be required in the preparation of materials for the paper."

Talk about impeachment rumbled in the air. During the preceding winter several resolutions had been

presented in the House, had been considered by committees, and as late as February 15 had been disapproved.

Then in a week, committee and House reversed themselves. On February 22, 1868, just two years from the day Johnson made his ill-fated speech from the White House steps, the Reconstruction Committee unanimously reported a resolution of impeachment, and two days later the resolution was adopted by the House, 128 to 47, the negative votes all Democrats. What had happened to bring about so swift a change?

The Senate had duly considered Johnson's reasons for suspending Stanton and resolved that they were insufficient. This was late in the afternoon of January 13, the Senate having had the question under consideration since January 11. On the morning of the 14th, Grant went to the office of the Secretary of War, locked and bolted the door on the outside, turned the key over to the Adjutant-General, and at once sent a formal letter to the President, by the hand of General Comstock, saying that he had been notified of the action of the Senate and that by the terms of the law his own functions as Secretary of War ceased with the reception of the notice. Stanton was once more in possession.

With customary incivility almost his first act was

to send a messenger to Grant's office with word that he "wanted to see him." Had it not been before the days of electricity, he would no doubt have pressed a buzzer, as happened afterwards with other secretaries and other generals. Both Grant and Sherman four months before his removal had found Stanton's arrogance insufferable, and Grant at one time had concluded that either he or Stanton must resign.[1]

[1] "In 1866, 1867, and 1868, General Grant talked to me freely several times of his differences with Secretary Stanton. His most emphatic declaration on that subject, and of his own intended action in consequence, appears from the records to have been made after Stanton's return to the war office in January, 1868, when his conduct was even more offensive to Grant than it had been before Stanton's suspension in August, 1867, and when Grant and Sherman were trying to get Stanton out of the war office. At the time of General Grant's visit to Richmond, Virginia, as one of the Peabody Trustees, he said to me that the conduct of Mr. Stanton had become intolerable to him, and, after asking my opinion, declared in emphatic terms his intention to demand either the removal of Stanton or the acceptance of his own resignation. But the bitter personal controversy which immediately followed between Grant and Johnson, the second attempt to remove Stanton in February, 1868, and the consequent impeachment of the President, totally eclipsed the more distant and lesser controversy between Grant and Stanton, and doubtless prevented Grant from taking the action in respect to Stanton's removal which he informed me at Richmond he intended to take." (Schofield, *Forty-six Years in the Army*, pp. 412–13.)

CHAPTER XXIX

A QUESTION OF VERACITY — THE IMPEACHMENT PROCEEDINGS — ELECTION AS PRESIDENT

JOHNSON was furious. That day a bitter, far-reaching dispute began, involving the good faith and truthfulness of Grant and the veracity of Johnson. It severed all relations between the two. Johnson contended that the Tenure of Office Act was unconstitutional, and that in any event, by the manner of its phrasing, it did not apply to Stanton or any other of Lincoln's appointees. He wanted to test it in the courts, and he declared that Grant agreed to "return the office to my possession in time to enable me to appoint a successor before final action by the Senate upon Mr. Stanton's suspension, or would remain as its head awaiting a decision of the question by judicial proceedings."

Grant denied that he had made such an agreement. He admitted that some time after assuming the duties of Secretary, when the President asked his views as to the course which Stanton must pursue to gain possession of the office in case the Senate should not concur in his suspension, he had replied in substance that Stanton would have to appeal to the courts to reinstate him. "Finding that the President was de-

sirous of keeping Mr. Stanton out of office, whether sustained in the suspension or not, I stated that I had not looked particularly into the Tenure of Office Bill, but that what I had stated was a general principle and if I should change my mind in this particular case I would inform him of the fact. Subsequently, on reading the Tenure of Office Bill closely, I found that I could not without violation of the law refuse to vacate the office of Secretary of War the moment Mr. Stanton was reinstated by the Senate,[1] even though the President should order me to retain it, which he never did. Taking this view of the subject and learning on Saturday, the 11th instant, that the Senate had taken up the subject of Mr. Stanton's suspension, after some conversation with Lieutenant-General Sherman and some members of my staff, in which I stated that the law left me no discretion as to my action should Mr. Stanton be reinstated, and that I intended to inform the President, I went to the President for the sole purpose of making this decision known and did so make it known. In doing this I

[1] Sec. 5 — That if any person shall, contrary to the provision of this Act, accept any appointment to or employment in any office, or shall hold or exercise any such office or employment, he shall be deemed, and is hereby declared to be, guilty of a high misdemeanor, and, upon trial and conviction thereof, he shall be punished therefor by a fine not exceeding ten thousand dollars or by imprisonment not exceeding five years, or both said punishments, in the discretion of the court.

fulfilled the promise made in our last preceding conversation on the subject."

The trouble was that Johnson did not know Grant. He could not comprehend finality of purpose in one who did not storm and bluster. Like many other stubborn men of narrow opportunities he overestimated his own power of persuasion. As Grant was leaving after announcing his decision, Johnson said he would expect to see him again. To Johnson this meant further argument with the probability of Grant's acceding to his views. To Grant it meant nothing of the sort. He had made up his mind. Johnson had misjudged Grant once before when he told Sherman Grant was going to Mexico after Grant had said he did not intend to go. He might have profited by that experience.

The 14th was Cabinet day. Johnson, in whose own hand Comstock had placed Grant's written notification and who had read it in Comstock's presence, ignoring the letter, sent word back by Comstock that he wanted to see Grant at the meeting. In his controversial letter to Johnson, dated January 28, 1868, Grant says: —

"At this meeting, after opening it as though I were a member of the Cabinet, when reminded of the notification already given him that I was no longer Secretary of War *ad interim*, the President gave a

version of the conversations alluded to already. In this statement it was asserted that in both conversations I had agreed to hold on to the office of Secretary of War until displaced by the courts, or resign, so as to place the President where he would have been had I never accepted the office. After hearing the President through, I stated our conversations substantially as given in this letter. . . . I in no wise admitted the correctness of the President's statement, though, to soften the evident contradiction my statement gave, I said (alluding to our first conversation on the subject) the President might have understood me the way he said, namely, that I had promised to resign if I did not resist the reinstatement. I made no such promise."

Here the question of veracity arises. The next morning the "National Intelligencer," the Administration organ, had an editorial purporting to give an account of the meeting, leaving Grant in the position of having then admitted equivocation and a breach of faith. Grant called with Sherman at the White House to protest against it. At a meeting next day Johnson read the editorial to the members of the Cabinet and secured from each of them a confirmation of the "Intelligencer" report. Still later each gave the President a written statement confirming Johnson's recollection of the affair.

Gideon Welles, who had long included Grant in his accumulating collection of malevolents, thus describes the scene in his "Diary": —

"The President was calm and dignified, though manifestly disappointed and displeased. General Grant was humble, hesitating, and he evidently felt that his position was equivocal and not to his credit. There was, I think, an impression on the minds of all present (there certainly was on mine) that a consciousness that he had acted with duplicity — not been faithful and true to the man who had confided in and trusted him — oppressed General Grant. His manner, never very commanding, was almost abject, and he left the room with less respect, I apprehend, from those present than ever before. The President, though disturbed and not wholly able to conceal his chagrin from those familiar with him, used no hard expressions nor committed anything approaching incivility, yet Grant felt the few words put to him and the cold and surprised disdain of the President in all their force."

The correspondence between Grant and Johnson growing out of this dispute began with a request from Grant, on January 24, that the President give him in writing an order, given verbally five days earlier, to disregard Stanton's orders as Secretary of War. "I am compelled to ask these instructions in writing,"

he says in the letter of January 28 already quoted, "in consequence of the many and gross misrepresentations affecting my personal honor, circulated through the press for the past fortnight, purporting to come from the President, of conversations which occurred either with the President privately in his office or in Cabinet meeting. What is written admits of no misunderstanding."

So far as Grant was concerned the correspondence ended with his letter of February 3 in response to Johnson's letter of January 31. There is nothing in American history before or since to compare with this challenge of the President's veracity by the General of the Army.

Badeau says that Grant first wrote a reply much milder in tone, admitting the possibility that Johnson might have honestly misconstrued his position. But Rawlins, who unlike Grant saw the political bearing of the controversy, said: "This will not do; it is not enough"; and drafted a paragraph directly contradicting and defying the President. This may well be true; at any rate, the letter unequivocal and personal destroyed all possibility of further relations and made Grant at once the head of the Republican Party.

Grant in his letter said of Johnson's statement:—

"I find it but a reiteration, only somewhat more

in detail, of the 'many and gross misrepresentations' . . . which my statement of the facts set forth in my letter of the 28th ultimo was intended to correct; and I here reassert the correctness of my statements in that letter; anything in yours in reply to it to the contrary notwithstanding. I confess my surprise that the Cabinet officers referred to should so greatly misapprehend the facts in the matter of admissions alleged to have been made by me. . . .

"From our conversations, and my written protest of August 1, 1867, against the removal of Mr. Stanton, you must have known that my greatest objection to his removal or suspension was the fear that some one would be appointed in his stead, who would, by opposition to the laws relating to the restoration of the Southern States to their proper relations to the Government, embarrass the Army in the performance of duties especially imposed upon it by these laws; and it was to prevent such an appointment that I accepted the office of Secretary of War *ad interim*, and not for the purpose of enabling you to get rid of Mr. Stanton by my withholding it from him in opposition to law, or, not doing so myself, surrendering it to one who would, as the statement and assumptions in your communication plainly indicate was sought. . . . The course you would have it understood I had agreed to pursue was in violation of

law, and without orders from you; while the course I did pursue and which I never doubted you fully understood, was in accordance with law, and not in disobedience to any orders of my superior.

"And now, Mr. President, when my honor as a soldier and integrity as a man have been so violently assailed, pardon me for saying that I can but regard this whole matter, from the beginning to the end, as an attempt to involve me in the resistance of law, for which you hesitated to assume the responsibility in orders, and thus to destroy my character before the country. I am in a measure confirmed in this conclusion by your recent orders directing me to disobey orders from the Secretary of War, — my superior and your subordinate, — without having countermanded his authority to issue the orders I am to disobey."

He concluded with the assurance "that nothing less than a vindication of my personal honor and character" could have induced this correspondence on his part.

From that day Grant refused to have any dealings whatever either with Johnson or with members of the Cabinet who, in confirming Johnson's version of their interview, gave the sanction of their names to his assault on Grant's veracity.

While Congress and the country were intent on his dispute with Grant, Johnson was nursing his

determination to get rid of Stanton. He refused to recognize him as Secretary. He directed Grant to ignore Stanton's orders. He tried to get Sherman to take Stanton's place; but Sherman sturdily refused. Johnson's personal objection to Stanton was only one of the factors in his determination. He was obsessed with the idea of testing the Tenure of Office Act in the courts and thus gaining a tactical advantage over his enemies in Congress. On February 21 he ordered Lorenzo Thomas, the Adjutant-General, to take possession of the office of the Secretary of War, and gave him a letter which Thomas handed to Stanton removing Stanton. Stanton held on to the office and barred Thomas out. The defiance was on.

Then it was that Stevens presented his report, signed by all the Republican members of the Reconstruction Committee, impeaching Andrew Johnson of high crimes and misdemeanors in office. Two days later the House adopted the resolution, 126 to 47, every Republican present voting "aye." The trial in the Senate began almost immediately. Johnson escaped conviction by a single vote, and, strange to say, one of the earliest concessions on both sides was that, so far as Stanton's removal was concerned, he had acted entirely within the law. The charges on which the case against him was finally made were

Stevens's charges of general contumacy which the House had a few weeks earlier refused to regard as justifying impeachment.

The first vote of the Senate on the articles of impeachment was on May 16. Then a recess of Congress was taken to May 26, when the final vote was taken. During the recess the National Union Republican Convention assembled in Chicago, and on May 20 Grant was nominated for President by a unanimous vote, with Schuyler Colfax, Speaker of the House, for Vice-President. Grant had never voted but once in his life and then for Buchanan, "because I knew Frémont." If he had qualified in Illinois in 1860, he would have voted for Douglas. But his antecedents were Republican. That was the political faith of his father, and through his experience with Johnson he had developed a partisan bias which led him even to the point of hoping for Johnson's conviction on the articles of impeachment. There was no incongruity, therefore, in his becoming the Republican candidate, and it was lucky for the party that they could command the service of the outstanding figure of the time. The elections of the fall of 1867 had shown an alarming Democratic tendency. With any other candidate than Grant in 1868 the Republicans might have been hard pressed for success, assuming that the Democrats showed

ordinary political sense in their selection of a candidate.

Grant received the notice of his nomination at Galena. His letter of acceptance was commendable for brevity and good taste. He undertook to discuss no issues, but gave assurances that he would try to carry out the purpose of the party which had named him, and, as an afterthought it is said, he appended to the letter the sentence, "Let us have peace," an appeal which went to the people's heart and proved to be the rallying cry of the campaign. But in spite of everything the result was by no means a foregone conclusion. Seymour and Blair, the Democratic candidates, carried New York, New Jersey, and Oregon among the Northern States. Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Indiana went Republican by unexpectedly close margins. Grant carried twenty-six States, it is true, with 214 electoral votes, and Seymour only eight States with 80 electoral votes, but the popular majority was much smaller than these figures would indicate. If it had not been for the negro vote in the South, which was still unsuppressed and which prevented that section from being solidly Democratic, as it afterwards became, Seymour would have been elected.

From the day of his election till he went back to Washington for his inauguration, Grant remained in

intellectual seclusion. Although he spent much time in Washington, few men of standing in his party saw him, and with these few he was strangely reticent. As in the Army he had never held a council of war, so now he asked no one's advice about his Cabinet or his inaugural address. He made no suggestions to Republican leaders in Congress as to measures which he might like to see them enact pending his induction into office.

Stevens had died in the summer of 1868, and his mantle of leadership had been grabbed by the braggart Butler, who kept the House torn with dissension and noisy with turmoil in his determination to force through laws still further to harass the stricken South. In order to insure to Republican "carpet-baggers" and "scalawags" possession of the local offices in the unreconstructed States, a resolution was framed ordering the district commander to remove all civil officers who could not take the iron-clad oath and appoint in their places men who could subscribe to it, with a proviso that those whose disabilities had been removed by Congress might also be eligible to office. The resolution was passed unanimously in both houses without debate. At the time of its adoption it benefited only carpet-baggers and ex-Confederate "scalawags" who had become Republicans. To put beyond the reach of legislative

recall the negro's right to vote, the Fifteenth Amendment of the Constitution was framed, providing that "The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude."

Thus Grant, in entering upon the Presidency, — the first strictly civil office he had ever held, — found himself confronted by political conditions in the South which might have staggered a statesman of lifelong experience and for which he was in no way responsible, while domestic questions affecting the nation's financial credit and foreign problems affecting its standing among the nations of the world pressed for consideration. Those who criticize the course of his Administration and condemn him for his choice of advisers might first point out what statesman of the day would have done better in his place and what advisers would have aided him to more beneficent results.

CHAPTER XXX

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

When Grant became President, it seemed for the moment as though a second "era of good feeling" were at hand. Democrats as well as Republicans looked on him as their chosen leader. There was only one unpleasant feature about his assumption of office. Grant refused to ride in the same carriage with Johnson from the White House to the Capitol on inauguration day. He could not forget that Johnson had called his truthfulness in question.

Grant's first inaugural was written entirely by himself; no one saw a draft of it until the day of its delivery. As the 4th of March approached without an intimation of what Grant had in mind, A. R. Corbin — a prospective brother-in-law who was gaining a livelihood on the fringe of Wall Street — handed the President a complete draft of an inaugural. But, without glancing at the contents, Grant handed the document to Badeau, telling him to lock it up in a desk, keep the key, and let no one look at it until after the 4th of March.

The inaugural was brief, — only twelve hundred words, — yet in spite of its brevity it contained sen-

tences which stuck in the mind and some of which have since become embedded in our common speech: "The responsibilities of the position I feel, but accept them without fear. The office has come to me unsought; I commence its duties untrammeled." "All laws will be faithfully executed, whether they meet my approval or not. I shall on all subjects have a policy to recommend, but none to enforce against the will of the people. Laws are to govern all alike — those opposed as well as those who favor them. I know no method to repeal bad or obnoxious laws so effective as their stringent execution."

In spite of some criticism of certain seemingly self-sufficient passages, the inaugural took well; but when the new Cabinet was announced, Republican politicians gasped with dismay. Only two of the names had ever been guessed and some were not suspected by the nominees themselves until they appeared in the list. Elihu B. Washburne, of Illinois, was named Secretary of State; it had been assumed that Grant would recognize in some way the services of his earliest influential friend, but this particular distinction had not been foreseen. When it appeared in a few days that the appointment was intended as a personal compliment, and that Washburne was to hold the position just long enough to enjoy the title, the criticism was general. To one who complained that

the occupant of the position of Secretary of State ought to be able to speak the French language correctly, the reply was made, "He ought at least to be able to speak his own." But Washburne's creditable record as Minister to France, during the Franco-Prussian War and during the trying days of the Commune, saved his reputation in the end.

A. T. Stewart was named Secretary of the Treasury. The Senate promptly confirmed his nomination, and until somebody recalled a long-buried law, enacted early in the century, providing that this particular office should not be filled by any man engaged in commerce, no one in Washington realized that the great merchant and importer was ineligible to the place. Grant, with sublime indifference to technicalities, asked the Senate to repeal the law and John Sherman, himself to be Secretary of the Treasury later, moved the repeal; but owing to Sumner's opposition the motion was defeated. Grant was no more to blame for making the nomination than the Senate for confirming it. They might have been expected to be familiar with the law. Sumner in his subsequent attacks on Grant denounced him for trying to upset a statute which "had stood unquestioned until it had acquired the character of fundamental law," yet Sumner himself must have been ignorant of this "fundamental law" when he first aquiesced in

Stewart's confirmation. George S. Boutwell, a member of the House from Massachusetts, once a business man in a small way, Commissioner of Internal Revenue during the Civil War, was named in place of Stewart — an unexceptionable appointment.

E. Rockwood Hoar, of Massachusetts, was made Attorney-General; he was a learned lawyer of distinguished antecedents and high character, a member of the House, a friend of Sumner, a scholar of pungent wit and exalted ideals of public duty. He gained the ill-will of certain Republican Senators because of his austerity in rebuking their demands for the appointment of judges, district attorneys, and United States marshals in the South whom he believed to be unfit, and when Grant subsequently nominated him to fill a vacancy on the Supreme Bench caused by Stanton's death, these Senators, urged on by Butler who hated him, brought about the rejection of the nomination. Grant stood squarely with Hoar in his effort to preserve the quality of the Federal Bench. The story of his final withdrawal from the Cabinet is an interesting chapter in the history of the times.

General Schofield, whom Johnson had made Secretary of War after Stanton's retirement, was requested by Grant to retain his place for a while. A personal compliment this. Schofield was succeeded in a few weeks by Rawlins whom Grant needed always

near his side. No one could fairly object to his selection. Adolph E. Borie was named for Secretary of the Navy. He was a wealthy and philanthropic Philadelphian whom no one outside Philadelphia had ever heard of. He was an invalid and had no thought of the Cabinet until he saw that he had been nominated. He resigned as soon as he could gracefully retire, and was succeeded by George M. Robeson, of New Jersey, then a young lawyer of striking ability, who was reputed at the time to have been recommended by Borie for the succession. The Secretary of the Interior was Jacob D. Cox, Governor of Ohio, who not only had a fine record as brigadier-general in the Civil War, especially at Franklin and Antietam, but who was a man of education and wide reading, a forceful and interesting writer and a Republican of conservative tendencies. When running for Governor of Ohio he had announced himself boldly as opposed to negro suffrage. The Postmaster-General was John A. J. Creswell, of Maryland, for a short time a member of the House and Senate, like some others in the Cabinet hardly known outside his own community.

For eight years Grant was President. His two administrations were marked by extraordinary achievement both in the domestic and in the foreign field. True, he was the target of abuse and criticism; no

President in the long list, with the possible exception of Johnson, has been more bitterly assailed, and he was vulnerable at many points. He was a soldier with a limited experience in dealing with men of affairs and only a superficial acquaintance with politics; with no great knowledge of history, or literature, and innocent of the science of government; yet William Tecumseh Sherman, in one of his flashes of political insight, came very near the mark when he wrote in the summer of 1868: "My own opinion is that, considering the state of the country, Grant will make the best President we can get. What we want in national politics is quiet, harmony, and stability, and these are more likely with Grant than any politician I know of."

Grant made serious mistakes; but almost without exception they were errors arising from childlike trust and unfortunate asssociations. They seldom affected adversely measures of broad public policy. When we recall the great accomplishments of his administrations, — the establishment of the principle of international arbitration through the Treaty of Washington and the adjudication of the Alabama claims by the Geneva Tribunal; the upholding of American dignity and the assertion of American rights in the matter of the Virginius and the handling of the Cuban complications; the rehabilitation of the national

credit, and the maintenance of the national honor, the inauguration of a consistent and merciful policy toward the Indians; the recognition of the principle of civil service reform; and the restoration of a semblance of order in the South, — we are tempted to subordinate, though we cannot honestly ignore, the personal differences which marred the period of his service and the public scandal attaching to some of those who, in the shelter of his friendship and of offices bestowed upon them through his favor, betrayed his trust. It was a time of universal prodigality and extravagance, when speculation flourished and the nation's moral fiber had been coarsened by the excesses of war. It was not strange that the widespread taint invaded public place. It would have been more strange if it had not.

Grant's first choice for Secretary of State had been James F. Wilson, of Iowa. Wilson would have been a creditable selection, although foreign affairs were not directly in his line, for he was able, industrious, and high-minded. He first accepted the appointment, but at Grant's request consented that Washburne should hold the place a little while, so that Washburne might go to Paris with enhanced prestige. The understanding was that Washburne's tenure should be nominal, that he should not initiate a policy or make appointments, but he did both, and

Wilson, when he found what had been done, refused to take the place.

As a substitute for Wilson, Grant hit upon Hamilton Fish and a day or two after inauguration sent General Babcock, his military aide, over to New York to offer Fish the place. Fish had wealth, social and family position. He was about sixty years old; had been governor; had served in the Legislature, in the National House of Representatives, and for one term in the United States Senate, where he had gained Sumner's friendship; but he had not been in public life since he quit the Senate in 1857; had made no great mark in any of the offices he had held, and was not widely known. Grant had met him occasionally in New York, but was not intimately acquainted with him.

Fish did not care for the position of Secretary of State. He was Grant's second choice and not long under consideration; yet he was to preside over the State Department for a longer period than any other Secretary in the history of the Government, except Seward, and to leave a record of distinguished achievement commensurate with his length of service. Seward is quoted by John Bigelow, who visited him at Auburn shortly after the appointment, as saying that Grant had no idea of a foreign policy except brute force. That he (Seward) had told them

at Washington that there were but three men fit to be Secretary of State that he knew; they were, Sumner, Charles Francis Adams, and himself; that no one but himself could make an analysis of the Alabama correspondence in less than a year, and that it would take four months for him to do it. "Fish will refer everything to the Attorney-General. He will do nothing himself; he cannot. Sumner wished and had a right to have been asked into the Cabinet, though he would not have accepted. It was neither courteous nor wise in Grant to have neglected this attention."

"The Cabinet is not strong, but it is respectable," wrote Bigelow to Huntington, March 16, 1869. "Whether it lasts or goes to pieces depends upon Grant's purpose in selecting it. If he has a policy and wanted men merely for instruments to put it into operation, it is admirably chosen. If he wants responsible ministers he has not got them. Hamilton Fish is my neighbor in the country — an amiable, but heavy man, who at the bar ranked as a moderate attorney, but whose name I suspect does not appear in the books of reports once. . . . Mr. Washburne is another illustration of Grant's fidelity to his friends. In company with many of his predecessors he [Washburne] will have one advantage over the people he is to live among—he will learn a great deal more from

them than they are likely to learn from him. . . . Grant has lost prestige enormously in the country."

"He [Grant] seems to have no comprehension of the nature of political forces," writes Bigelow three weeks later. "His Cabinet are merely staff officers, selected apparently out of motives of gratitude or for pecuniary favors received from them. His relatives and old friends were among the first provided for. . . . No President before was ever got in the family way so soon after inauguration. By his secretiveness in regard to his choice of a Cabinet and by his taking men unknown to his party or to any party, he wounded the pride of Congress incurably. . . ."

Carl Schurz tells in his "Reminiscences" an anecdote heard in the cloak-room of the Senate at this time. One of the best lawyers in the Senate heard a rumor that President Grant was about to remove a federal judge in one of the Territories, a lawyer of excellent ability and uncommon fitness for the bench. The Senator remonstrated and Grant admitted that as far as he knew there was no allegation of the unfitness of the judge; "but," he added, "the Governor of the Territory writes me that he cannot get along with that judge at all, and is very anxious to be rid of him; and I think the Governor is entitled to have control of his staff." So much for contemporary criticism!

CHAPTER XXXI

PERSONAL EQUATIONS

"I LIKE Grant," wrote James Russell Lowell after a visit to Washington in March, 1870, "and was struck with the pathos of his face; a puzzled pathos, as of a man with a problem before him of which he does not understand the terms."[1]

Grant had then been President a year — a year crowded with pressing problems, some of which were complicated, it is true, but all of which might almost be stated in terms of Grant himself, and Sumner, with Fish and Motley as ever-present factors. If in the early weeks of the Administration there had been at hand a disinterested friend endowed with the ability to handle men of widely differing tastes and antecedents, the personal misunderstanding between the President and the leader of the Senate might never have developed into a feud endangering the success of the Administration and embittering the lives of all concerned; for Grant and Sumner had common aspirations, although their methods of approach were so unlike. But no such friend appeared to put his finger on the point of sympathetic contact

[1] Letter to Leslie Stephen, March 25, 1870.

through which harmonious relations could have been maintained.

It might be thought that Fish, by virtue of his place and of his earlier relations with Sumner in the Senate, could at least have been of service as a go-between; but whatever may have been his inclination, he was not the man to undertake the task. Sumner, while glad to have him as a friend, had never looked upon him as an intellectual equal, and held him somewhat lightly as a figure in affairs. While Fish, at first regarding Sumner as his mentor, came slowly to resent the other's condescensions, and true to his Dutch ancestry, once having set his mind against his old associate, aligned himself immovably with his official chief, thus helping to accentuate the feud. Besides, he early came to formulate a sane, far-seeing diplomatic programme of his own.

Sumner had a low opinion of Grant's political sagacity. He never thought Grant should have been made President as a reward for military success, took no part in his nomination, and acquiesced reluctantly when he saw that it was bound to come. There was nothing strange in this. Sumner was not alone in questioning the wisdom of Grant's selection, and Grant was not the only President about whose fitness he had been in doubt. He never quite approved of Lincoln or understood him. "Mr. Lincoln

was a constant puzzle to him," says Carl Schurz. "He frequently told me of profound and wise things Mr. Lincoln had said, and then again of other sayings which were unintelligible to him, and seemed to him inconsistent with a serious appreciation of the task before us. Being entirely devoid of the sense of humor himself, Mr. Sumner frequently — I might almost say always — failed to see the point of the quaint anecdotes or illustrations with which Mr. Lincoln was fond of elucidating his arguments, as with a flashlight. . . . Many a time I saw Sumner restlessly pacing up and down in his room and exclaiming with uplifted hands: 'I pray that the President may be right in delaying. But I am afraid, I am almost sure he is not. I trust his fidelity but I cannot understand him.'" [1]

As for Grant, he had no skill in handling men of Sumner's type, differing therein from Lincoln, who had a way of dropping in at Sumner's house to drink a cup of the inimitable tea, in brewing which the Massachusetts statesman took peculiar pride, and after sipping it like an old gossip purring the real object of his visit into Sumner's ear. Nor would Grant have done as Lincoln did after his second inauguration, when Sumner's hostility to the Louisiana policy threatened a fatal break. "Dear Mr. Sum-

[1] *The Reminiscences of Carl Schurz*, vol. II, pp. 312–14.

ner," Lincoln wrote, "unless you send me word to the contrary I shall this evening call with my carriage at your house to take you to the Inauguration Ball"; and at the Ball Lincoln walked in with Sumner arm in arm and kept him by his side.

Sumner thought in 1864 that Lincoln should give way to a more forceful candidate, just as in 1868 he thought a recognized Republican of ripe political experience would have been better qualified than Grant to meet the problems of the time. It may be he was right. The trouble would have been to find the man.

When Grant took office Sumner was the unchallenged chieftain of the Senate. He had been chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations ever since Seward entered Lincoln's Cabinet, and, as Chase had also gone, no one was left to rival him in seniority or reputation. All things conspired to give him prominence and swell his own conception of his place in national affairs. He was well born and highly educated and had been trained almost from boyhood for a political career. He had read every serious book which had been written on the science of government, knew the best writings of all times and countries, and had stored in a capacious memory a prodigious mass of information about many things, with which he tiresomely embellished his speeches in the Senate and his daily talk. He was one of the few Americans of his

day who had familiar correspondence with scholars, writers, and public men abroad. Politically invincible at home in Massachusetts, he was regarded elsewhere as a hero and the champion of liberty, for his fame as an uncompromising advocate of the rights of men ran back to the fermenting time of 1848.

Mr. Lodge in his "Early Memories" has given us a delightful portrait of Sumner. He speaks of his wide learning, of his power of devouring books with extraordinary rapidity, and the gift of remembering everything. "Sumner," he says, "was by nature a dreamer, a man of meditation, a man of books, and a lover of learning. By the circumstances of his time and by the hand of fate he was projected into a career of intense action and fierce struggle. There he played a great part, but his nature was not changed. He still remained at bottom a dreamer and a man of books. . . . A statesman in the largest sense, although not a legislator who drafted laws and attended to legislative details . . . he cared nothing for politics in the ordinary acceptation of the word. . . . He was a most imposing figure. Tall, large, not regularly handsome in features, but with a noble head and a fine intellectual face. No one could look upon him and fail to be struck and attracted by his looks and presence. To all this was added that rarest of gifts, a very fine voice, deep and rich with varied

tones and always a delight to the ear. . . . Coupled with his deficiency in a sense of humor, and akin to it, was a curious simplicity of nature. . . . He was anything but conceited, but he had vanity . . . in a marked degree. . . . It was not the vanity which offends, for it was too frank, too obvious, too innocent to give offense, but it made him an easy prey to those who wished to profit by it. . . . No man had better manners in daily life, manners at once kindly, stately, and dignified, and he could do a courteous action in a most graceful way."

Schurz said that in himself Sumner felt the whole dignity of the Republic; in sporting language, "he had a good eye for country, but no scent for a trail."

A marked contrast, this, to Grant, small in stature, slouchy in dress and bearing, taciturn in public, without ostentation or vanity, meagerly read and hardly educated beyond West Point necessities, careless of refinements, unfamiliar with the graces of society, his clothing reeking always with the stale odor of tobacco, ill at ease with men of culture, yet simple and direct in speech and in his manner of approaching other men.

"As different in their mental attributes as in their physical appearance," says Charles Francis Adams.[1] "While Mr. Sumner was, intellectually, morally, and

[1] *Before and after the Treaty of Washington*, p. 75.

physically, much the finer and more imposing human product, Grant had counterbalancing qualities which made him, in certain fields, the more formidable opponent. With immense will, he was taciturn; Sumner, on the contrary, in no way deficient in will, was a man of many words, a rhetorician. In action and among men Grant's self-control was perfect, amounting to complete apparent imperturbability. Unassuming, singularly devoid of self-consciousness, in presence of an emergency his blood never seemed to quicken, his face became only the more set, tenacity personified; whereas Sumner, when morally excited, the rush of his words, his deep, tremulous utterance, and the light in his eye, did not impart conviction or inspire respect. Doubts would suggest themselves to the unsympathetic, or only partially sympathetic, listener whether the man was of altogether balanced mind. . . . Quite unconsciously on his part he assumed an attitude of moral superiority and intellectual certainty, in no way compatible with a proper appreciation of the equality of others. In the mind of a man like Grant, these peculiarities excited obstinacy, anger, and contempt."

Charles Eliot Norton has preserved one of Grant's rare gleams of humor, when he replied to somebody who told him Sumner had no faith in the Bible: "Well: he did n't write it."

Motley was Sumner's personal friend; a member of the same literary and social group in Boston,[1] — a group embracing Longfellow, Lowell, Emerson, Hawthorne, Agassiz, Andrew, Dana, and Holmes; of distinguished achievement as the historian of the Dutch Republic, of ripe culture and great personal charm, of cosmopolitan experience, familiar with the universities and libraries of Europe, and of some diplomatic experience by reason of his service as Minister to Austria under the Lincoln and Johnson Administrations, which came to a distressing end through Seward's clumsy handling of an unknown critic's abusive letter and his own excessive sensitiveness. Sumner and his other friends pressed Grant to make him Minister to England partly as a balm for injured pride. But behind it also was Sumner's unexpressed assumption that through his position in the Senate he was to be responsible for the conduct of our foreign relations during the incumbency of an ignorant Executive and an inexperienced Secretary of State.

With our grievances against Great Britain pressing for a settlement, he wanted to have at London a representative in whom he could place perfect trust, and from his point of view Motley was the ideal man.

But in other ways the choice was not by any means

[1] The Saturday Club.

the best which could be made. With all his personal charm and social distinction, Motley was lacking in the tact and diplomatic skill which were required in an effective American representative in London at that time. In fact, he was not by nature adapted to diplomacy at all, although no finer type of American citizenship could have been chosen to stand as the enbodiment of our best ideals in other lands, and it is not surprising that shortly Grant and Fish should have found it necessary to take the negotiations with the British Government into their own hands, excluding him entirely from the ultimate adjustment.[1]

To understand all this and how the Administration's attitude toward Cuba and San Domingo helped to emphasize the split, one must first understand a clash of personalities, which came near to wrecking Grant's Administration at the beginning, and the effects of which were felt long after Sumner's death.

[1] E. L. Godkin, writing from London, on April 15, 1869, said: "Motley's appointment is a good one from the social point of view, bad, I think, in every other way. I do not think he has the necessary mental furniture for the discussion of the questions now pending between England and America; and he is a little too ardent. His lectures here have been very disappointing, commonplace rhetorics without any thought. . . ."